



EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE

Department of Political and Social Sciences

**The Political Openness of the Broadcast Media in Mexico:
The predominance of economic and entrepreneurial
interests**

by

Manuel Alejandro Guerrero Martinez

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view
to obtaining the Degree of Doctor of the
European University Institute

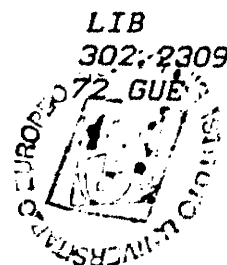
Florence
November 2002

b/code inside →



3
20880

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE
Department of Political and Social Sciences



**The Political Openness of the Broadcast Media in Mexico:
The predominance of economic and entrepreneurial
interests**

by

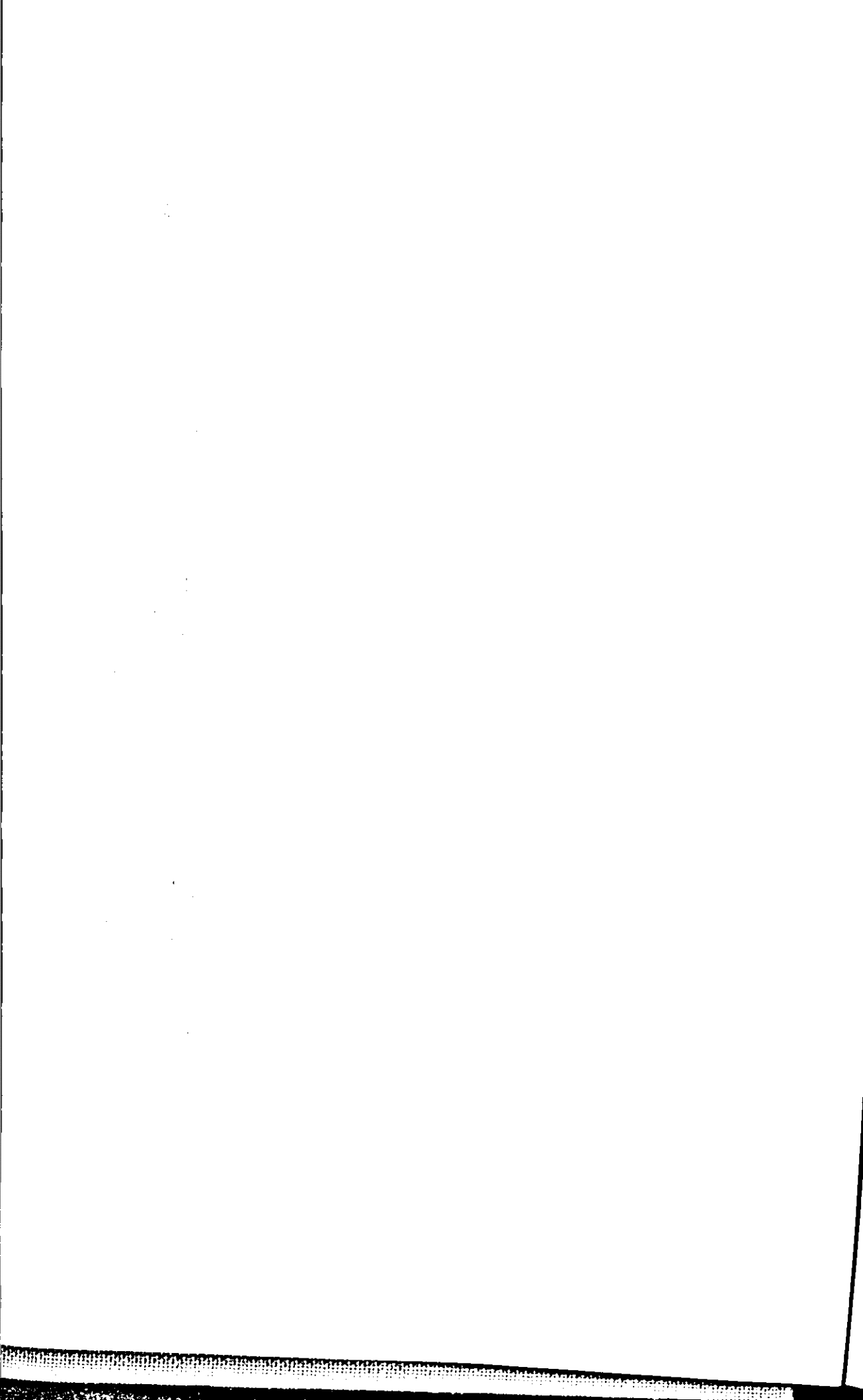
Manuel Alejandro Guerrero Martinez

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the Degree of Doctor of
the European University Institute

Examining jury:

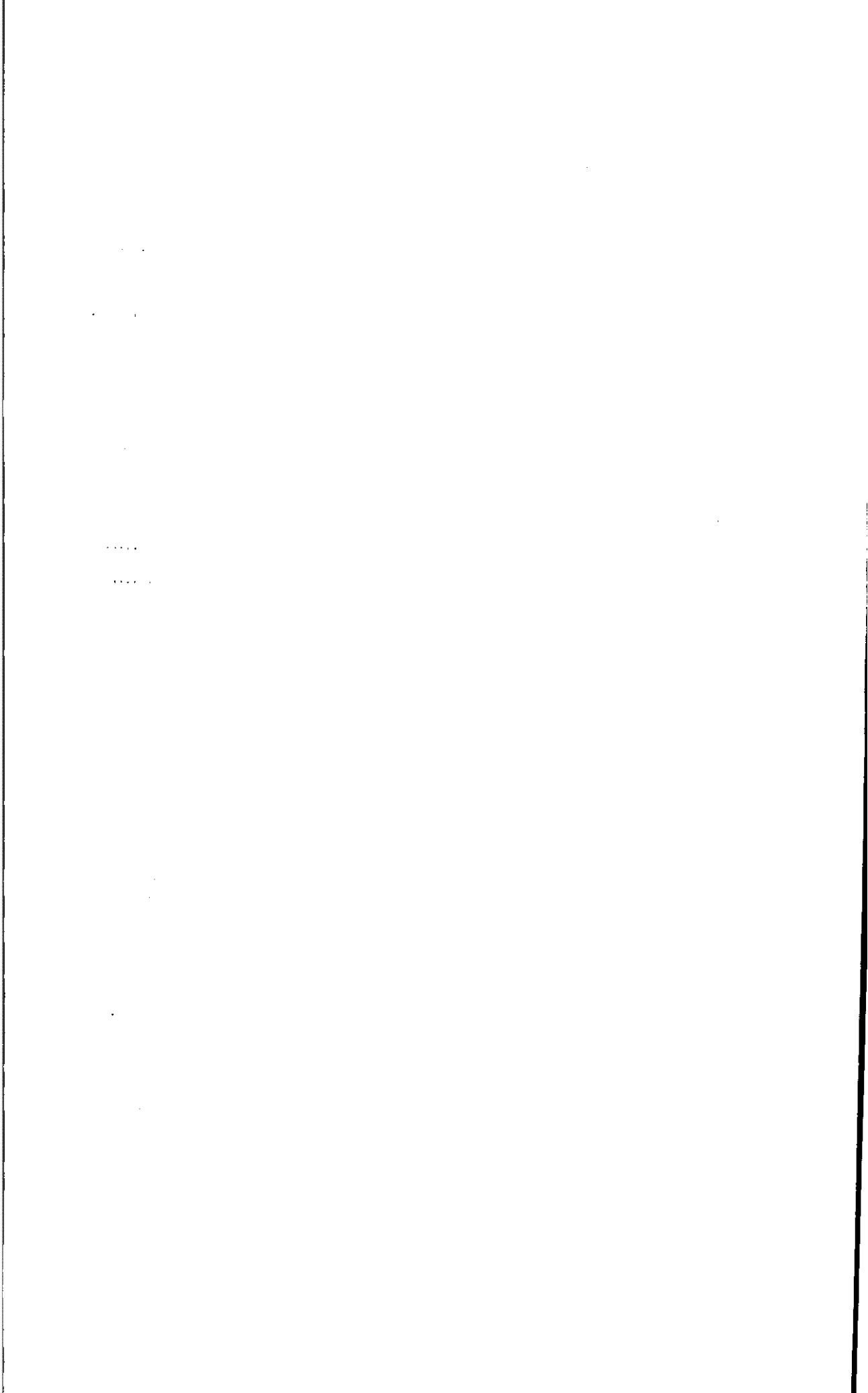
Prof. Adrienne Héritier (EUI)
Prof. Chappell Lawson (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)
Prof. Philippe C. Schmitter (EUI - supervisor)
Dr. Laurence Whitehead (Nuffield College Oxford)

Florence
November 2002



Index

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	p.i
INTRODUCTION:	
□ Mass Media and Transitions.....	p.1
PART 1: Traditional Linkages between the Mass Media and the Regime	
□ Chapter One: The Commercial Model and the News Broadcasts.....	p.32
□ Chapter Two: The Broadcasters as an Interest Group.....	p.63
PART 2: Political Liberalisation and Broadcasting, 1970s-1994	
□ Chapter Three: The Political Context I: 1970s-1994.....	p.96
□ Chapter Four: Television: The Renewal of Support for the Regime.....	p.122
□ Chapter Five: The Initial Transition of Radio in Mexico, 1980s-1994.	p.156
PART 3: The 1996 Electoral Reform and the Openness on the Broadcast Media	
□ Chapter Six: The Political Context II: 1994-2000.....	p.190
□ Chapter Seven: Mexican TV in the Late 1990s:	
An Accelerated Openness.....	p.215
□ Chapter Eight: Consolidating the Trend:	
Radio and Political Openness, 1994-2000.....	p.252
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS	
□ Media and Democracy in Mexico.....	p.289
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	p.311



Acknowledgements

*"The Root of evil, Avarice,
That damn'd ill-natur'd baneful Vice,
Was Slave to Prodigality.
That Noble Sin; whilst Luxury
Employ'd a Million of the Poor,
And odious Pride a Million more
Envy it self, and Vanity
Were Ministers of Industry"*

Bernard de Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (1714)

The recent change in government that occurred in Mexico, which ended the seventy years rule of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*, PRI, has generated great expectancy and hope among the population especially in regard to reducing corruption, to generating an effective and fair application of justice, to consolidating the respect of civil, political and human rights of groups such as Chiapas' Indians, but also in regard to other kind of issues completely alien to democratic rule such as better wages, more employment, and harder policies against crime. Though in strict electoral terms there is now an acceptable level of fairness, openness and a relative equity in party competition, the consolidation of democracy in Mexico still needs a long way to go, especially in terms of the strengthening of a liberal constitutional rule of law that is evenly applied.

However, there are some important institutions upon which political pluralism and a certain degree of accountability can now be supported. At first sight, one might suppose that one of such institutions is the mass media, since it is usually believed that the media is an almost natural defender of democracy because it is an arena of free debate, a watchdog against power abuses and/or a mirror of the true interests of society. Indeed the actual media in Mexico are better prepared to defend the maintenance of a pluralistic political arena, but such an attitude is not the outcome of the media's democratic convictions.

Here I sustain that in Mexico the actual support of the media to democracy (or at least to political pluralism) is the outcome of a coincidence between the media particular agenda oriented towards business and profits in a situation of growing market competition *with* a context characterised by a growing electoral competition among political parties. In this sense, political pluralism was, at most, a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for the openness in the media. The answers must be better sought in their economic and business interests. In his *Fable of the Bees*, subtitled "private vices, public benefits", Mandeville recounts how private evil vices such as luxury, greed and envy, all lead to public benefits by encouraging enterprise. In the same way, one can state that though the mass media is oriented towards the defence of its particular, individual and egoistic interests centred on profits, the global outcome could also be a very useful mechanism that helps sustain an open and pluralistic political arena indispensable for democracy to flourish.

This work is the product of four years of study and learning, along which I received the generous support and advice of many people. Above all, I have to thank Professor Philippe C. Schmitter for his patience, encouragement and constant supervision on my work, which he undoubtedly enriched with remarkable comments. I also thank Mrs. Eva Breivik, Professor Schmitter's secretary, for all her logistic support, that especially in the final stages was invaluable. This research would not have been possible without the financial support granted by the *Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnologia* and by the *Banco de México*. I must also underline that the European University Institute proved to be the right environment for developing and discussing the research which led to this thesis.

Special thanks go to Professors Lorenzo Meyer, Sergio Aguayo and Soledad Loaeza, who contributed with valuable comments to the writing of various chapters of this thesis. I am extremely grateful to all my friends of the *Spanish Corner* (Juan Manuel Forte, Iñaki López Martínez, Joan Anton Sánchez de Juan and Javier Ramos Díaz), and of the *Grupo Contadino* (Marc Prat, Igor Pérez Tostado and Fernando Echavarría), to my great friend Robert Schütze, and especially to some extraordinary good *fellas* with whom I shared long evenings at the unforgettable Fiasco Bar (the original, *the one and only!*): Andrés Malamud, Helena Carreiras, Noura Hamladji, Isabela Atanasiu, and most of all to

my *gran amigo* Samuel Gil Martín. I have to thank also Isabela Corduneanu for delightinly preventing me from finishing this thesis earlier.

Finally, I dedicate all this effort to my son, *il piccolo* Emiliano.

Introduction:

Mass Media and Transition

An important amount of literature exists relating the media and democracy, both in theoretical and empirical terms. However, for many years there appeared to be almost nothing written on the development of mass media in relation to political conditions other than democracy—except for some studies on the Soviet media¹—and, until very recently, there existed very little literature on the media in political transitions.

Scholars who focused their attention on what Samuel Huntington called the “third wave of democracy”,² paid little attention to the mass media in these processes. For instance, in one of the most relevant works on transitions from authoritarian rule, the media are never mentioned.³ This silence contrasts with the widespread belief among media scholars that the media is a crucial element in modern democracies. Nevertheless, it has to be recognised that this situation is changing and that since the late 1980s other works have attempted to fill this important gap in literature on transitions and democratic consolidations.⁴

¹ See for instance Ithiel de Sola Pool, “Communications in totalitarian societies”, in I. de Sola Pool, Wilbur Schram, et al., *Handbook of Political Communication*, Chicago, Rand McNally College Publishing Co., 1973.

² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

³ Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter and Lawrence Whitehead, (eds.), *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 4 volumes, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.

⁴ Though the list is not at all exhaustive, some relevant recent works are:

For Latin America see: Elizabeth Fox (ed.), *Media and Politics in Latin America: The Struggle for Democracy*, Beverly Hills, Sage, 1988; Thomas Skidmore (ed.), *Television, Politics and the Transition to Democracy in Latin America*, The Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993; Richard Cole, (ed.), *Communication in Latin America: Journalism, Mass Media and Society*, Wilmington, DE, SR Books, 1996.

For Africa see: Gordon F. Jackson, *Breaking Story: The South African Press*, Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1993; Louise Bourguault, *Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1995.

For Eastern Europe see: Al Hester and Kristina White, (eds.), *Creating a Free Press in Eastern Europe*, Athens, GA, University of Georgia Press, 1993; Slavko Splichal, *Media Beyond Socialism*, Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1994; Liana Giorgi, *The Post-Socialist Media: What Power the West?*, Aldershot, England, Avebury, 1995; Patrick O'Neil, (ed.), *Post-Communism and the Media in Eastern Europe*, London, Frank Cass, 1997.

For Asia see: John A. Lent, “Mass Communication in the Pacific: Recent Trends and Developments”, in *Media Asia*, 16, no.1, 1989; Jon Heuvel Vanden and Everette E. Dennis, *The Unfolding Lotus: East Asia's Changing Media*, N.Y., Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, Columbia University, 1993; Sunanda K. Data-Ray, “Press Freedom and Professional Standards in Asia”, in *Media Asia*, 23, no.3, 1996.

Cross-regional works on the subject are: Vicky Randall, “The media and democratization in the Third World”, in *Third World Quarterly*, vol.14, no.3, 1993, and the book she edited, *Democratization and the Media*, London, Frank Cass, 1998; Carlos H. Filgueira and Dieter Nohlen, (eds.), *Prensa y transición*

These works have mainly focused on the impact of the mass media on the processes of transition and democratic consolidation.⁵ Most of this literature takes as their point of departure questions regarding the contributions of the media to those processes. The principle aspect that these latter works on media in transition/consolidation processes either assume or try to prove is that mass media has played (or is actually playing) an important role in these processes. In this sense, the media is conceived as part of the democratic forces that push regimes towards transitions or play crucial roles in the consolidation of democracy. For instance, the work of Renate Arndt on the Uruguayan press during the last moments of the authoritarian rule argues that the central intention of the media "was undoubtedly oriented towards a regime change".⁶ This is also the position of Juan M. Pereira and Manuel Trenzado Romero about the role for democratisation of some Portuguese journals, like *Diario de Lisboa*, the weekly publications *O Mundo* and *Expresso* or the monthly *Seara Nova* that opposed the pre-1974 regime, and that even after the Revolution continued to oppose the Communists, like the weekly *Tempo*. In the case of Portugal, the authors conclude that "decades of censorship had invested the media with powers they did not possess before".⁷ In both cases, the democratic orientation of the media, or at least their militancy on the part of the transition forces, is taken for granted and is seen as a reaction against authoritarianism. As one author puts it,

[During transitions], given greater political freedom and an attentive public, one would really expect the national media to come into their own. Moreover, their part will be crucial, while the

democrática: experiencias recientes en Europa y América Latina, Frankfurt am Main, Vervuert, 1994; John D. H. Downing, *Internationalizing Media Theory: Transition, Power Culture*, Thousand Oaks, CAL, Sage, 1996; Patrick O'Neil, (ed.), *Communicating Democracy. The Media and Political Transitions*, Boulder, CO, Lynne-Rienner Publishers, 1998.

⁵ For instance, see Skidmore, [1993], p.1; O'Neil, [1998], p.1; and Randall, [1998], p.1. The last two authors note, however, that the impact of the media for democracy might not necessarily be positive.

⁶ Renate Arndt, "el rol de la prensa en el proceso de cambio de régimen en Uruguay", in Filgueira and Nohlen, [1994], p.130. In Uruguay, the kind of press that initially contributed more to the Uruguayan democratisation process were the weekly political publications, which were part of what was called "alternative media". As Elizabeth Fox states "alternative media" appear when,

People and organizations deprived of any access to the military-controlled mass media and often eager to keep alive a cultural and political resistance to the dictatorships began to use other media like community radio and newspapers, local video production and neighborhood theatre. These experiences came to be known as "alternative" media because they took the place of or supplanted information, opinion, and entertainment functions of the mass media. The alternative media were also a form of expression or protest in a society where having an opinion or expressing an idea was dangerous (Fox, [1988], p.26).

⁷ Juan Montabés Pereira and Manuel Trenzado Romero, "El escenario simbólico del caso portugués", in Filgueira and Nohlen, [1994], p.68.

international media can only play a marginal role. The transition phase almost by definition must involve competitive elections. The media must inform people about the different parties and candidates and help them to choose from among them. They should also be the watchdogs, exposing instances of electoral malpractice. At the same time, they must help to keep up the pressure for change. If much is required of the media, then also they are likely to receive unprecedented interest and support from the public.⁸

What is seldom explained is why, when and how the media started to “behave like that.” This literature on the relations between media and the political regime has not been restricted however, to exposing the media as independent and intervening variables for the transition or consolidation processes, it has also explored this relationship citing the media as the outcome of transition and democratisation. Some studies show that in order to build more independent mass media, it is required that the political system itself becomes more democratic and grants better conditions for the media and the journalists to do their job.¹⁰ So here the independence of the mass media is the product and not the producer of democracy.¹¹

The answers, however interesting they may be, cannot explain why there are some types of media that seem to “behave in more democratic ways” than others. Considering the media in such “un-problematised” terms, leaves aside questions regarding internal media developments and transformations that may have pushed the media to seek for more independence from the political regime. Such independence of the media from the political

⁸ Vicky Randall, [1993], p.639.

⁹ An interesting answer to these questions is provided by Chappell Lawson for the case of the printed press in Mexico. According to him, one crucial explanation for the printed press *abertura* relates to the emergence of a new culture of professional journalism. New independent newspapers emerged during the 1980s and 1990s that refused to enter into collusion with the regime and have tried to stick to professional journalistic practices. This is an interesting explanation about the printed presses’ move into independence. One has to take into account that the printed press in Mexico is not truly a “massive media”, but quite an elitist one. The printed press has an extremely low level of readership and some of its functions in that country have served as a space where different sectors of the elite communicate, exercise pressure on the policies, and exchange messages. In this sense, the importance of the Mexican printed press lies not on the quantity of its public, but on the quality of it, and this I think is a basic condition for understanding the openness of this type of media (See Chappell Lawson, “El cuarto poder: la prensa independiente en Mexico”, Internet Version on the Journalistic Web Site *Pulso del Periodismo* www.pulso.org/Espanol/Archivo/hemisphere.htm).

¹⁰ Curiously, this is stated in an article on Mexican mass media. See Ilya Adler, “The Mexican Case: The Media in the 1988 Presidential Election”, in Skidmore, [1993].

¹¹ Assuming that the emergence of “free” media is an outcome of democratisation, simply states that the outcome of democratisation will naturally be the creation of democratic institutions in a tautological fashion. It presumes a linear explanation. In brief, in many of these “transitional approaches” to the media, “democracy is the natural outcome of democracy”. Moreover, taking the media either as an independent or a dependent variable of a democratisation process cannot entirely explain the fact that actually the relations between the media and the political regime are interdependent. Under certain circumstances one can have

regime depends on a complex series of legal, economical and political factors that might restrict the modes in which they select and present information. The degree of their independence is reflected more clearly—though not exclusively—in their capacity to decide autonomously on how to present political information and material related to politics without any kind of formal, informal, direct or indirect restrictions (or threat of them) by the political regime.

Focusing only on the contributions of the media to transition and consolidation, results in an incomplete understanding of the “pass” from an authoritarian to a more independent media regime (note that I avoid using the adjective “free”). These approaches cannot explain why some forms of media are actually more open and independent than others that behave in more cautious manners (i.e. in the way they present political information). Attention must be paid on the interests of the media (which are not fixed in time and vary depending on the type of media) and their capacity to orient their actions according to their interests and preferences within the context of transition. This provides an answer to the why, how and when the media should start moving towards a more independent and autonomous role from the political regime, i.e. to explore the limits of tolerance in the presentation of information.

If one considers the media in such terms, one might be better prepared to explain the different roles the media might play in transition and consolidation processes in different countries by understanding the specific circumstances that lead the media to create an independent space in which they can voice their interests (which may or may not be similar to the ones voiced by those in favour of the *abertura* and democracy). Though the presentation of information in increasingly independent and open ways might eventually coincide with (and hopefully become) a claim in favour of democracy, one should be careful not to come to the conclusion that the independent media are “democratic defenders” *per se*.

By considering the interests of the media and the limitations they face in specific contexts, one can understand their incentives and strategies to move (or not) towards more independence at a certain time. For instance, in the case of the Hungarian press, some months after the Hungarian Communist Party transformed itself into the Hungarian

more influence on the other. This is recognised by Vicky Randall in the introduction to her

Socialist Party in October 1989, a number of state and party newspapers “began to privatize themselves spontaneously, seeking to become independent organizations before a new government came to power”.¹² Conversely, as this work shows, in the case of Mexico television and radio broadcasters began to take a more independent stance only long after the transition process had begun.

The media compose a relative autonomous aggregate of actors, each with the capacity to define their interests within specific contexts that limit their options. Greater openness in the forms of presenting information and material on politics might eventually lead the media also to become “democratic supporters” themselves, but the linkage cannot be taken for granted. Moreover, the coincidence in time between a growing political pluralism or a democratisation process and the media openness in the presentation of news and information may not be responding to the same causes. This is why one must focus on both *internal media changes* (where the interests are defined) and the *wider context where the media are inserted* (which limits their action). In this sense at least, the following variables must be taken into account so as to understand the forms and rhythms in which news broadcasts and other information programmes on politics began to present the voices and the positions of alternative political actors:

- At the external level (the context):
 - a) The degree in which the traditional mechanisms of control of the media are still effective.
 - b) The impact of the economy and market conditions during the transition on the different media organisations (In some countries of the “Third Wave”, it must be noted that their processes of transition were accompanied by unusually deep economic crisis, which makes this an intervening element in the analysis).
- At the internal level (the definition of the media interests):
 - a) The relations between the media and the political elite.
 - b) The degree of journalistic professionalism.
 - c) The uses given to technology in order to expand communication possibilities.

Democratization... [1998], p.2.

¹² Andras Lanczi and Patrick O’Neil. “Pluralization and the politics of media change in Hungary”, in O’Neil. [1997], p.86.

The External Aspects

A. The degree of effectiveness of traditional control mechanism in transition contexts

Within the context of transition, it is important to determine the extent to which the previous regimes exercised control both by formal and informal means. Probably in all cases, the electronic media within a specific non-democratic regime was far easier to control than the printed media. Though it may be possible to assume that authoritarian regimes were generally less rigorous in establishing tighter mass media control than Communist systems, in certain cases, like South Korea previous to the reforms of 1987, the regime was successful in creating a comprehensive preventive censorship structure in practically all kinds of media.¹³

In the context of a political transition, many of the traditional rules through which control was exercised over the media—especially, but not exclusively, the informal ones—become diffuse, simply because *unbounded uncertainty* is the dominant overall characteristic of such a situation. Two sets of criteria are crucial for understanding the extent to which the regime exercised control over the different types of mass media, and therefore, during a process of transition one must focus on their actual effectiveness in controlling the media. One set of criteria is composed by the legal frameworks and arrangements that regulate the media; the other is composed by the different forms in which the regime interferes in a direct manner in the economy and finances of the media (from direct and indirect subsidies to governmental advertising expenditures).

Under authoritarian rule (and also in Communist systems) many governments enacted different laws, regulations and statutes that explicitly, or implicitly, restricted freedom of expression and subjected the media to the direct or indirect control of the official organisations that watched over the ways in which political information and material was presented and published. Control was not limited to the media, i.e. to the transmitters or presenters of information, but also included the sources of information, centralising it and in many cases, only divulging it through official departments and organisations. In many cases, only the official version was published and presented in broadcastings without any

¹³ See Kyu Ho Youm and Kyulto Youm, *Press Law in South Korea*, Iowa, Iowa State University Press, 1986.

possibility of having alternative open and legal sources of information. The result was that in many of these countries alternative printed media –or *samizdat* publications—could be found on the black market.

At the same time, some of these regimes decided to intervene directly in the property structure placing *ab initio* the media under public-ownership models, or nationalising them once they took power, as in Argentina's broadcasting in the late 1970s. Some others –e.g., Brazil and Mexico—decided to keep a market structure in the media, but established different regulations with regard to content, obtaining permissions, licenses, concessions, and so forth, depending more on political than on strictly market and economic rationales. Finally, it should be mentioned that some of these regimes obliged the different kinds of media and/or their personnel to incorporate (or belong) to various organisations that ranged from political parties to unions and chambers.

During the transition process, some of these indicators of legal control lose their efficiency, either because new laws and regulations are enacted or because, in a context of uncertainty, the more informal aspects of these controls become difficult to apply. This is especially the case in relation to the centralisation of information. With the transition, new media organisations are created and it becomes more difficult to maintain control on the sources of information. However, it is not necessarily true that the rest of these traditional mechanisms of control completely lose their effectiveness during the transition. And it may be the case that even after the transition, some of these old mechanisms are still at work. In some former communist countries, e.g. in Slovakia and other south eastern European countries,¹⁴ these mechanisms were still alive at least until the late 1990s and were only masked under new formal rules, which were applied with the same old spirit, for the benefit of a new (and not so new) political elite. This limited the freedom of the press, undermining any advance towards a more independent and autonomous media. There are more striking cases like Cambodia, where even after the United Nations sponsored free and competitive elections in 1993, the government not only enacted new laws (1995) allowing for criminal prosecution for the publication of material affecting “national security and political

¹⁴ For the case of Slovakia see: Andrej Skolkay, “Journalists, political elites and the post-Communist public: the case of Slovakia”, in *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, vol.12, n.4, 1996. This same volume dedicates many other articles to the situation of the media and democracy in Eastern Europe.

stability", but has not hesitated in using the more brutal forms of repression of the past, such as imprisonment and murder of journalists and editors.¹⁵

The second set of criteria is composed of a large variety of the State's economically and financially interventionist policies in the media. This refers only to the ways in which the regime either directly or indirectly affects the financial situation of the different types of media.¹⁶ Authoritarian regimes developed a wide variety of mechanisms to directly and indirectly subsidise and sustain the mass media. In countries where there existed publicly-owned media, financing was provided by parties or unions, or directly through executive ministries. In contrast, in countries where there existed a privately-owned media structure, more indirect ways of subsidising the media were developed. These ranged from government advertising, to printing paper provisions, to tax exemptions and preferential policies, and to diverse ways of bribing media personnel. These financial aid mechanisms of the regime to the media in some cases became very important for the latter's survival as a business.

During the transitions of the late 1970s and 1980s, in places such as Latin America, many of these financial subsidies to the media were severely affected because of the beginning of a process of privatisation or re-privatisation, and also because the transition coincided with a deep economic crisis that affected the capacity of the State to sustain its usual level of expenditure. In this sense, this set of criteria relates to the second external variable mentioned above: the economic impact of the transition on the media. Nevertheless, one should avoid concluding that the economic crisis or the diminished capacity of the regimes to directly and indirectly subsidise the media have had as a consequence the emergence of well defined market structures completely independent of the regimes. What should be determined through this set of criteria is the degree to which the traditional "financial supports" are still effective, and the extent to which they might still obstruct the emergence of more independent media.

¹⁵ John A. Lent, "The mass media in Asia", in O'Neil, [1998], p.163.

¹⁶ This must be understood differently from the second external aspect mentioned above that refers to the ways in which the general economic circumstances that accompanied the transition have impacted on the decisions of the media to support (or not) a more independent media regime, and eventually, a more open political situation.

B. The impact of the economic context of the transition on the media

For this variable one can consider the following criteria: the existence of privatisation pressures coming from foreign or large national corporations and the emergence of market-oriented attitudes in the media. Of course, both criteria may become more determinant within the context of economic crisis and classic IMF policy receipts.

The "Third Wave of transitions" from authoritarian rule have coincided with a general liberal (or neo-liberal) economic *Zeitgeist* in which all economic activities of the State and the maintenance of extended Welfare systems were severely criticised. For instance, in Latin America, where the mass media have traditionally been privately owned, the political transitions began in the midst of deep economic crisis and with enormous financial debts that left their state apparatuses in extremely fragile conditions and almost bankrupt. In some other regions, e.g. in Eastern Europe, where the mass media belonged either to the State or to the ruling party, the collapse of the regime combined with the precariousness of public funds and with the foreign corporations' interests for investing there.¹⁷ Here, the common outcome has been the privatisation of the media. This trend has not been exclusive to these countries, since many Western democracies where there has been a long tradition of publicly owned media (basically in broadcasting) are experiencing pressure in favour of de-regulation and privatisation.¹⁸

The insertion of the media into market structures in the majority of the "Third Wave" countries, be it because of a failure of the regimes to establish other ownership patterns (as in the case of many Latin American countries),¹⁹ or because of the pressures from foreign corporations to enter into those markets (as in the case of many Eastern European countries)²⁰ the media is no longer wholly reliant on State funds for survival. The privatisation of the media has altered, and generally diminished, their "institutional"

¹⁷ Commercial pressures to enter the media business from foreign investment groups have been especially strong in Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

¹⁸ This aspect will be discussed in the next part of this chapter.

¹⁹ See the conclusions of the work of Elizabeth Fox [1988].

²⁰ See Owen V. Johnson, "The Media and Democracy in Eastern Europe", in O'Neil [1998].

dependence and subjection to the regime.²¹ This has also changed the power relations between the media and the regime, by giving the former an autonomous power base.

In the same manner, during the transition, market-oriented media began at different moments, to care more about their audiences and about advertising. With the increasing predominance of de-regulation, privatisation and other market promotion policies, the media began to seriously take into account the financial criteria to remain in business, and these at times ran contrary to the old political criteria that had kept the media closed. This is especially true in market-oriented media within the context of deep economic crisis, when economic difficulties might become a pretext for forgetting many of the traditional rules in a time when due to transition, they have become relatively diffuse. Trespassing the lines of tolerance could be the only way for some media organisations to remain in the business. However one must note that, even though this aspect might be important for the media's independence, it should not be overemphasised. As a number of East Asian countries show (for instance Thailand, Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore) the fact that there exists a market-oriented media structure in which even Western media corporations participate, but does not entail the upsurge of more independent media organisations. John Lent describes how even when Western corporations enter the East Asian media market (like Murdoch's News Corporation, Time Warner, Dow Jones, etc.), they do not promote more independence in the media organisations they acquire, but prefer instead to ally with local businesses and industrial, political and military powers, lending them continued support and protecting their interests.²² The market *per se* is not enough, and intervenient variables such as a deep economic crisis, or a political transition process might join forces in an attempt to push the media towards greater openness.

²¹ Though this does not mean that the strong links between mass media and different political groups have vanished. These links are translated into mutual favours, support, access to information, etc. The only thing that is stressed here is that the control of the regime over the media as *an institutional and a priori condition* – but perhaps not as *fact in certain situations*—disappears.

²² Lent, "The mass media in Asia", in O'Neil [1998].

The internal aspects

Three internal variables in the media are here considered: the emergence of new kinds of mediatic and political elite relations, the degree of journalistic professionalism, and the uses of new technology. The combination of these factors is important in determining the interests of the media and the position taken by the different kind of media in relation to the ways they *want* to publish and/or present political information.

In some cases, the media might still respond cautiously to the ways in which they present political information even during the firsts stages of a democratisation process. For instance, in Uruguay more than a year after its foundational elections took place, private TV channels still refused to accept paid announcements from human rights groups that were protesting the amnesty bill for the military officers who were suspected of being guilty of violations of those rights during the dictatorship. This attitude of self-censorship of private media, which had been important for survival during authoritarianism, was still prevalent for some time in television broadcasting.²³ Conversely, in the same country, Uruguay, the printed press played the opposite role, since from 1980 some printed magazines had been leading the way towards the transition and had started to oppose the regime.²⁴

A. The kind of relations between media and political elite

Reference is made here to the emergence of a different form of relationship between the media elite (owners and editors) and the political elite during the transition. In all countries –both democracies and non-democracies included—different types of relations develop between the media and political groups. In some cases, as in Sweden for instance, many journals and newspapers are directly linked to (and sponsored by) political parties. In other cases, these links are more subtle. In Britain an author shows the way in which the printed press –especially the one linked to the finance and banking sectors—favoured the Conservative Party in their information during the 1980s due to a coincidence of interests.²⁵

²³ Roque Faraone and Elizabeth Fox, "Political communication in Uruguay", in Fox [1988].

²⁴ The first important opposition weekly magazine, *Opinar*, appeared actually in October 1980. Since then, until 1984 many more weekly publications that favoured the transition were edited in Uruguay.

²⁵ See Greg Philo, "Political advertising, popular belief and the 1992 British general election", in *Media, Culture and Society*, vol.15, n.3, July 1993.

Except for the democratic purists, there should be no scandal about the fact that certain groups within the media show affinities to certain political groups. The difference with such linkages in non-democratic regimes is that these relations tend to place the media in a position of subordination, with few possibilities of altering such a condition, and turning the media top officials into accomplices of the regime. The overall result is that positions others than those of the government scarcely get any space.

However, though this might usually be the case in many non-democratic regimes, the subordination of the top media officials is not necessarily determined, and less so in a context of transition. Media top officials (owners included) and the political elite, both in the case of market- and public-owned media, may well have different "agendas" and interests that influence their behaviour. In some countries, a new generation of managers and owners of media organisations have emerged with the privatisation and the restructuring of privately-owned media. They seem to be "more concerned with economic efficiency and the national and international growth of their companies than with the national politics or sometimes even national markets".²⁶ The private television in Brazil, *Red O Globo*, is a good example. In that country, though the *O Globo* multimedia empire was created during the military dictatorship (and in many ways *O Globo* top managers and owners initially supported that regime), its directors decided to shift its allegiance in favour of the political *abertura* during the campaign in favour of the *direitas já* in a moment when the military were still in control of power,²⁷ and in this way not only generated for themselves a new legitimacy in the eyes of the public, but perhaps more importantly, secured their privileges before an emerging political elite.²⁸ In Uruguay, after the negative result of the referendum of November 1980 in which the military tried to legitimise a new constitution, a wide variety of political weekly magazines appeared. Working behind these weekly publications were many important opposition politicians-to-be, like Jorge Battle

²⁶ Elizabeth Fox, "Conclusions", in Fox [1988], pgs. 184-185.

²⁷ *Direitas já* was the campaign in favour of holding direct popular elections for the election of Joao Baptista Figueiredo for the presidency of Brazil. It is important to note that, though *O Globo* supported the military, since the times of Ernesto Geisel it decided to establish an alliance with the military *soft-liners* of the regime.

²⁸ See Andre Singer, "Nota sobre o papel da imprensa na transicao brasileira", in Filgueira and Nohlen [1994]. What is remarkable also is the almost spontaneous way in which *O Globo* directors decided to shift their preferences. According to two consistent observers of Brazilian media, Guimaraes and Amaral, they shifted from practically ignoring the popular protests to becoming strong supporters of the electoral process, encouraging the people to join (Roberto Amaral and Cesar Guimaraes, "Brazilian television: a rapid conversion to the New Order", in Fox [1988]).

and Julio Maria Sanguinetti. The aim of these publications was the gathering and forming of a political elite (something that was not new in the Uruguayan printed press) with whom the military found a moderate party to negotiate with. A different case is Romania, where after the important role played by television during the December 1989 Revolution, which ended the dictatorship of Ceaucescu, there still exist many old-regime interests in the media and their "new" top personnel that constrain it to develop into more truly independent positions.²⁹

Therefore, what must be explained through these variables are the incentives of the top media officials to seek or not a more independent relationship with the regime. The transition might change the interests of the owners of existent media. Also with the emergence of new media organisations during transitions, their owners might be more interested in running their businesses profitably than in coping with traditional rules.

In order to check for the emergence of these "new" attitudes of the media elite, one must at least consider the following criteria: the composition of the media elite during a transition; the possibilities for new interests to enter the media market; the different forms in which the media organisations are privatised and licensed. The subordination and collusion that usually (though not always) characterises the media elite in non-democratic regimes cannot be assumed to remain unchanged in a context of transition. Conversely, as many cases in Eastern Europe show, the transition from authoritarianism does not automatically involve the emergence of greater autonomy and security for the media elite to run their businesses, either in privately- or publicly-owned organisations.³⁰

B. The degree of professionalism of journalists and editors

Usually one of the reasons for the scarcity of studies on the media in non-democratic regimes has been that in such polities the mass media lack high standards of professionalism in the journalistic work and in news-gathering, either because the

²⁹ Richard A. Hall and Patrick O'Neil. "Institutions, transitions and the media: a comparison of Hungary and Romania", in O'Neil [1998].

³⁰ Two examples of this situation: Before becoming prime minister of the Slovak Republic, Vladimir Meciar promised that once in power, he would ban any journalist who dare to criticise him. The other example comes from Poland, when in March 1994, President Walesa decided to fire the chairman of the National Broadcasting Company, without the legal rights to do so (Both examples are cited from: Andrew K. Milton, "News Media Reform in Eastern Europe: A Cross-National Comparison", in Patrick O'Neil [1997], pgs.19-20).

journalists have been controlled by the regime or because the journalists have been simply unable to develop such standards. According to a widespread liberal interpretation, journalistic professionalism in democratic polities is generally conceived of as embedding an "ethics of impartiality". In the United States, the American Society of Professional Journalists has created an ethics code that states, amongst other things, that: "Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know".³¹ It is only through these attitudes of detachment that the professional journalist becomes the pillar of a "watchdog role" of the media over the political world –which is regarded to be "naturally" inclined to oppose the abuse of power.³² Therefore, it was pointless to study professional journalism in non-democratic regimes, since journalism was under political restrictions.

However, to understand professional journalism as the performance of an "objective and impartial role" in politics, even in democracies, sheds partial light over the complex relations between journalists and politicians, in which they are found also to co-operate for interviews, information, news-elaboration, news-gathering and so forth. It must also be considered that journalists' attitudes towards politics should be analysed in relation to the specific type of media in which they work (it is completely different to work for a business publication, like the *Wall Street Journal*, than to work for a Swedish newspaper closely linked to the Social Democratic Party).

In democracies, such as the U.S., there is a growing suspicion about defining journalistic professionalism *only* in terms of values such as objectivity, impartiality and neutrality.³³ Professionalism involves the journalists' capacity to transmit information in independent and autonomous manners, and this has to do with the journalists' investigative and research

³¹ Code of Ethics of the *Society of Professional Journalism*: http://spj.org/ethics_code.asp

³² See for instance William Rivers, *The Adversaries: Politics and the Press*, Boston, Beacon, 1970.

³³ During the 1996 election season in the U.S., an experiment on the media was conducted in North Carolina. With the collaboration of six newspapers and nine broadcasting stations it was launched a project called "Your Voice, Your Vote" using some concepts related to what has been labeled as "Civil or Public Journalism". According to Philip Meyer –an expert on this new development in journalism–, Civil Journalism is based on the need to stimulate citizen involvement in community issues, and this is done through adopting a new position that rids journalism of its traditional detachment and start caring about what happens in the communities. Instead of focusing on a supposed "objectivity of content", the stress must be placed on an "objectivity in the method" to collect news, and making a reporter's work replicable. About the North Carolina experiment on Civic Journalism see: <http://research.unc.edu/endeavors/aut97/dial.htm> About the nature and ends of Civic Journalism see the information published by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism in Washington, D.C., or consult its web page at: www.cpn.org/sections/affiliates/pew.html

methodologies (to compare, contrast, verify, etc.) and with their maintenance of a consistent and coherent position (that is invariably subjective). Any attempt to operationalise professionalism only in terms of values becomes problematic because concepts like objectivity, impartiality and commitment to truth are ambiguous. As James Curran shows, professionalism—in such terms—means different things to different people, and in different cultures, even among the Western societies.³⁴ He differentiates between the U.S., where in news reporting the accent is placed on entertainment and disclosure, and some Western European countries, where the news reporting give more space to “talking heads” and contrasting interpretations of events.³⁵ Which of these is more professional becomes difficult to tell.

In this subject, one must also take into account both the pressures that the journalist might be subject to in the media organisation in which he/she works,³⁶ and the fact that they may have preferences that cannot be ultimately hidden under supposedly objective and impartial stances at all time. The degree of professionalism in journalistic work requires then an indirect way of operationalisation based on the following criteria:

- a) The level of education of the journalists (in a broad sense, objectivity, impartiality and a commitment to truth, which are complemented by other technical knowledge);
- b) Answers to the classic questions on “who, what, where, when, why and how”,³⁷ plus a relative degree of diversity of sources (depending on the topic) must be covered in such journalistic work;
- c) The existence of the right to information (that guarantees the journalists access to information, and at the same time obliges them to inform the individuals);
- d) The existence of legal protection for journalistic independence and autonomy.³⁸

³⁴ Curran, “Mass media and Democracy: a reappraisal”, in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch, *Mass Media and Society*, London, Edward Arnold, 1991, p.98.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ Pressures from the media owners and editors may always exist and replace the pressures from the old regime. As one author says in the case of the Czech republic mass media (at least since the mid-1990s): “Censorship or any other form of direct political control does not exist the Czech Republic. Instances of attempted manipulation of the media are, perhaps, fewer and in many cases less blatant than in other Central European countries. None the less, some professional media observers conclude that few, if any, major Czech publications can claim to be truly independent of either pressures exerted by politicians or the political and commercial interests of their owners” (Steve Kettle, “The development of the Czech media since the fall of Communism”, in O’Neil [1997], p.44).

³⁷ Mitchell V. Charnley, *Reporting*, Holt, Rineheart and Winston, 1966, p.167.

³⁸ For journalists rights see: Tom Baistow, *Fourth-Rate Estate*, London, Commedia, 1985.

The emphasis is placed on creating conditions that make *possible* for journalists with a relatively high degree of education to do their jobs in an independent and autonomous way. If one considers these four criteria as the possible framework from which professionalism might evolve, then it can be acknowledged that in some countries, journalists were developing professional behaviour even before the transition started. In Poland for instance, many journalists used each of the crises of Communist rule (1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, 1980-1) to argue that greater openness of the mass media could help alleviate political tension and serve as an escape valve before they led to social unrest.³⁹ Many of these journalists were not advocating the end of Communism, rather they wanted to transform some spaces within it and secure independence and autonomy in their journalistic work. Since the times of Gomulka,

The new party leadership [...] knew that it needed the support of the print journalists to maintain its own position and to prevent a Soviet invasion. This informal bargain and the knowledge that they also had the support of the populace gave the Polish journalists, already equipped with an established professional ethic, some power in the defense of their work. The journalists repeatedly tested the boundaries of the permissible, an arrangement that was fostered by the censorship process. The result was a system that allowed for more open reporting and discussion of issues, which over time inevitably raised questions about the authority and knowledge of the party. The press was therefore part of the system, and yet apart from it: The party needed the press.⁴⁰

The relationship between journalists and the political world may be seen as a variety of "interactions between two sets of mutually dependent and mutually adaptive actors, pursuing divergent (though overlapping) purposes, whose interrelation is typically role-regulated, giving rise to an emergent shared culture, specifying how they should behave toward each other, the ground rules of which are open to contention and conflicting interpretation, entailing a potential for disruption, which is often controlled by informal and/or formal mechanisms of conflict management".⁴¹

Professional journalism relates then, to the journalists' level of education and to a framework that secures both the right to information and their legal protection against

³⁹ For a rich account on the Polish case see Jane Leftwich Curry, *Poland's Journalists: Professionalism and Politics*, N.Y., Cambridge University Press, 1989.

⁴⁰ Owen Johnson, in O'Neil [1998], pgs. 109-110, 112.

⁴¹ Jay G. Blumer and Michael Gurevitch, "Politicians and the Press: An Essay on Role Relationships", in Dan D. Nimmo and Keith R. Sanders (eds.), *Handbook of Political Communication*, London, Sage, 1981, pgs. 476-477.

pressure, both from politicians and from media editors and managers. This is how it becomes possible to study professional journalistic behaviour in non-democratic regimes. As in the case of the relations between top media officials and the political elite, there is no reason to assume that these internal actors of the media are necessarily conforming to a subordinate role.⁴²

C. The uses of new technology

This refers to the impact of new technology on the way in which the political information is presented and disseminated. A characteristic of non-democratic regimes has been their attempts to centralise and control information flow and sources. In contrast, the introduction and adaptation of new and more advanced technology supposes a reduction in the ability of governments to successfully control and centralise information.⁴³

In recent times, the adoption of new technologies for communication has implied much more than only "buying technology", but also deeper links between local media and some multimedia transnational corporations. Joint investments and technological improvements that broaden the spectrum of the media become increasingly difficult to control. An extreme example is provided by the relatively recent attempts of the government of Singapore to control the access of "surfers" to certain *internet* web-pages and sites.⁴⁴ Older examples are those of the transmissions of Radio Marti and Radio Free Europe to Cuba and the Eastern European Bloc respectively. As technology advances it becomes more difficult to control or censor the information flow. The expansion of technologies such as Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) and Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) have meant a huge

⁴² As Downing shows even in Eastern European Communist countries there was always some space for journalists to expand the debates and discussion on public matters (Downing, [1996], pgs. 69-73).

⁴³ The "Soft Technological Determinism" of the media gives another interesting insight into explaining the attitudes of the media in moving "towards a more independent media regime" in transition and consolidation processes. As stated by its proponent, De Sola Pool, these kind of studies try to avoid a strong technological determinism by recognising that technology interacts with other factors, whose influence is reciprocal. Therefore, the impact of technology is neither one-directional, nor immediate—and this is why it is called a "soft" determinism (Ithiel de Sola Pool, *Forecasting the Telephone*, New York, Ablex, 1983, p.5.). This is based on a premise that might seem rather obvious: the diffusion of instruments of communication at a distance favours freedom of communication (and conversely, their concentration, monopolisation and scarcity act against such freedom). This point is relevant since it is not technology alone, but its diffusion, which—in combination with other factors—might explain some of the pressures within the media to look for the creation of an independent media regime. See also her *Technologies of Freedom*, Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press, 1984, where she develops further the argument on technology.

increase in the speed and the quantity of information that could be transmitted through normal (twisted-pair cables) telephone lines.⁴⁵ Other technologies related to the transmission of information are the satellite and other wireless communications such as microwaves through which TV, radio and other broadband services are already available.⁴⁶ This translates into increasing possibilities for the individuals to receive a wider variety of information from diverse and alternative sources that, at least in principle, could be contrasted with the official versions of reality. One of the most striking examples of the uses of such new communication technologies is provided by the *Zapatista* revolutionary uprising in the southern Mexican province of Chiapas in January 1995.

However, as stated above when mentioning De Sola Pool's ideas on the "soft technological determinism", the adoption of new technology *per se* by the media does not automatically carry with it a more democratic *access* to information and to the media. An interesting study that may be considered to support De Sola Pool's premise of the "soft technological determinism" is that by Amaral and Guimaraes on the media in Brazil, in which they not only document the process of broadcasting development in that country, but most importantly, they also show how the adoption of new technology has failed to produce more democratic widespread information and access to the media due primarily to the virtual monopoly of the media giant *O Globo*.⁴⁷ Therefore, though technology by itself does not mean a more "democratic media", it may act to diminish the capacity of the regime to control and centralise the access of information, and in this way, indirectly favour a more independent media regime.

⁴⁴ See Gary Roldan, "The Internet and Political Control in Singapore", in *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 113, no. 1, Spring 1998.

⁴⁵ Leonard Sussman has labelled these advances as "technology of freedom" due to its impressive potential for transmitting and expanding information (L.R. Sussman, *Power, the Press and the Technology of Freedom: The Coming age of ISDN*, N.Y., Freedom House, 1989).

⁴⁶ Though it might be rightfully alleged that certain technologies, such as *internet*, are only used by a very small minority of individuals in the world –which is true–, this fact does not undermine its potentialities as a source of de-centralised and alternative communication for minority and otherwise underrepresented voices in society. The huge expansion of the internet, the adaptation of its capacities, and related technological communication advances can be followed in the web page of the Internet Society (ISOC), at www.isoc.org/help/map.

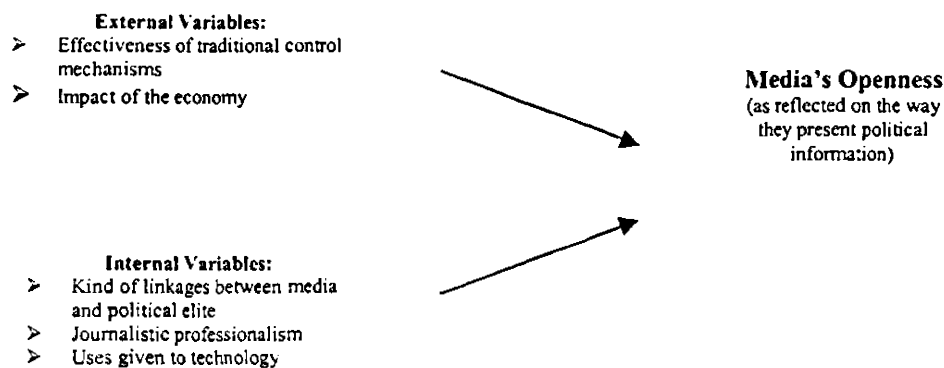
⁴⁷ Amaral and Guimaraes, "Media monopoly in Brazil", in *Journal of Communication*, 44, no.4, Autumn, 1994.

Up until this point we have discussed two external and three internal variables for understanding how the broadcasting media define their own interests and how their behaviour options are limited by the context in which they are inserted. This is quite important in understanding the motivations the media have (or not) when they start trespassing the limits of tolerance of the regime, and the timing when they start doing so. However, there are other cases when the openness, or at least an attempt to become more open, in the media might have been forced by certain circumstances, such as the collapse of the authoritarian regime (or the Communist system), independently of the variables above mentioned. That was, for instance, the case of Argentina and of countries such as Romania. But in the vast majority of cases, effective autonomy in the media –as measured by the ways in which they present the political information and material—is the consequence of the interaction of both the internal and external variables considered here (Figure A).

Figure A

Variables Affecting the Media's Openness in Presenting News and Information on Politics

(why, when and how in a context of transition)



The Media and the Transition in Mexico

This thesis discusses precisely the above mentioned variables⁴⁸ in order to understand the conditions that motivated the broadcast media in Mexico to seek higher degrees of openness in their presentation of news and political information. The media's openness is studied in this work through an evaluation of the ways radio and TV news broadcasts presented the news and other information material on politics in the late 1980s and 1990s, especially during federal electoral seasons (the most explicitly visible periods for presenting political information on different actors). Additional material was collected through eight interviews that only in specific cases will be cited to support the arguments developed.⁴⁹

This thesis aims to provide answers to the following questions: How was the relationship between the media and the regime (i.e. the links between media entrepreneurs and the political elite, and the exchange of support between media and regime)? What was the role of the news broadcasts within the regime and what kind of information did the news broadcasts present? Was there any difference between radio and TV news broadcasts? How did they report on the official party, the PRI, and the President? How did they report on opposition parties and alternative political actors? And most importantly, why and how did the news broadcasts start to report and inform on these latter forces (the process of openness on the media)?

One of the most persistent features of the Mexican post-revolutionary regime (MPRR) was its control over the political information and material transmitted through the media. This is

⁴⁸ With the exception of the professionalism of journalists that is discussed in the final remarks.

⁴⁹ Only four of them were willing to be cited by name: José Carreño Carlón (Co-founder of the newspaper *La Jornada* and actual Director of the Communications Department at the Universidad Iberoamericana); Raúl Trejo Delarbre (Professor of the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of UNAM and Director of the monthly opinion magazine *Etcétera*); Guillermo Salas Vargas (Corporate Vice-President of the Radio Network *Grupo Radio Mil*); and Roberto Ordorica (former General Manager of the newscast *Monitor*, of the newscast *La Ciudad* and owner of the radio local station "La 'I' de Ixtapan" [14000 khz] of Ixtapan de la Sal, State of Mexico). The other four interviewees asked not to be cited by name, so they will appear as: Top-Executive of *Monitor*; Top-Executive of *Grupo Radio Centro* (the largest radio network in Mexico); Share-holder of *MVS TV* (a private microwave TV system); and Top-Executive of *Televisa*. Additionally some of the most persistent difficulties in obtaining information that should be public (like advertising expenditures on the media or the records of the National Chamber of Radio and Television) were the distrust of those responsible for the keeping of such information because of a possible misuse of it, the excessive number of identity proofs the author must present before examining it, and the open and explicit denial for consulting it on the grounds that such information is reserved "for official uses only" (?).

not surprising since this attitude is characteristic of non-democratic regimes –in the Mexican case, of a limited pluralistic regime with many features of authoritarianism as described by Juan Linz in his analysis of such kind of regimes.⁵⁰ For him these regimes are,

Political systems with limited, not responsible political pluralism; without elaborate and guiding ideology (but with distinctive mentalities); without intensive nor extensive political mobilization (except at some points in their development); and in which a leader (or occasionally a small group) exercises power within formally ill-defined limits but actually quite predictable ones.⁵¹

However, contrary to what might be expected in a privately controlled media system, the political liberalisation process in Mexico did not generate more open, critic and independent broadcast media. The political transition and the growing of political pluralism in Mexico were not reflected in these media for years. And when they decided to report on such processes and to open their microphones to these alternative voices, political opposition parties were already controlling some important local and state governments and congresses. Thus, it is possible to say that the political transition was a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for explaining the media's recent openness. But then, if the explanation is not found at the political level, what were the conditions that led these media towards more openness and autonomy? And how did they implement these changes?

I sustain that the relatively recent openness of the media in presenting the increasing political pluralism on the screens and air waves (especially during electoral periods) is better explained by the transformation of the economic conditions in which they traditionally developed. The economic context in which these media had to play in the 1980s and 1990s was not of stability and growth, as it had been for decades, but one of recurrent crises and growing competition. These changes at the economic level generated incentives for the entrepreneurs, first on radio and much later on TV, for experimenting with innovative programme formats (like the "talk-radio") that gradually reflected on the contents as well. Within the context of recurrent economic crises and competition for audiences and resources, radio and later TV stations decided to "test the limits of tolerance" and shifted their attention to the already existing political pluralism in order to make it a

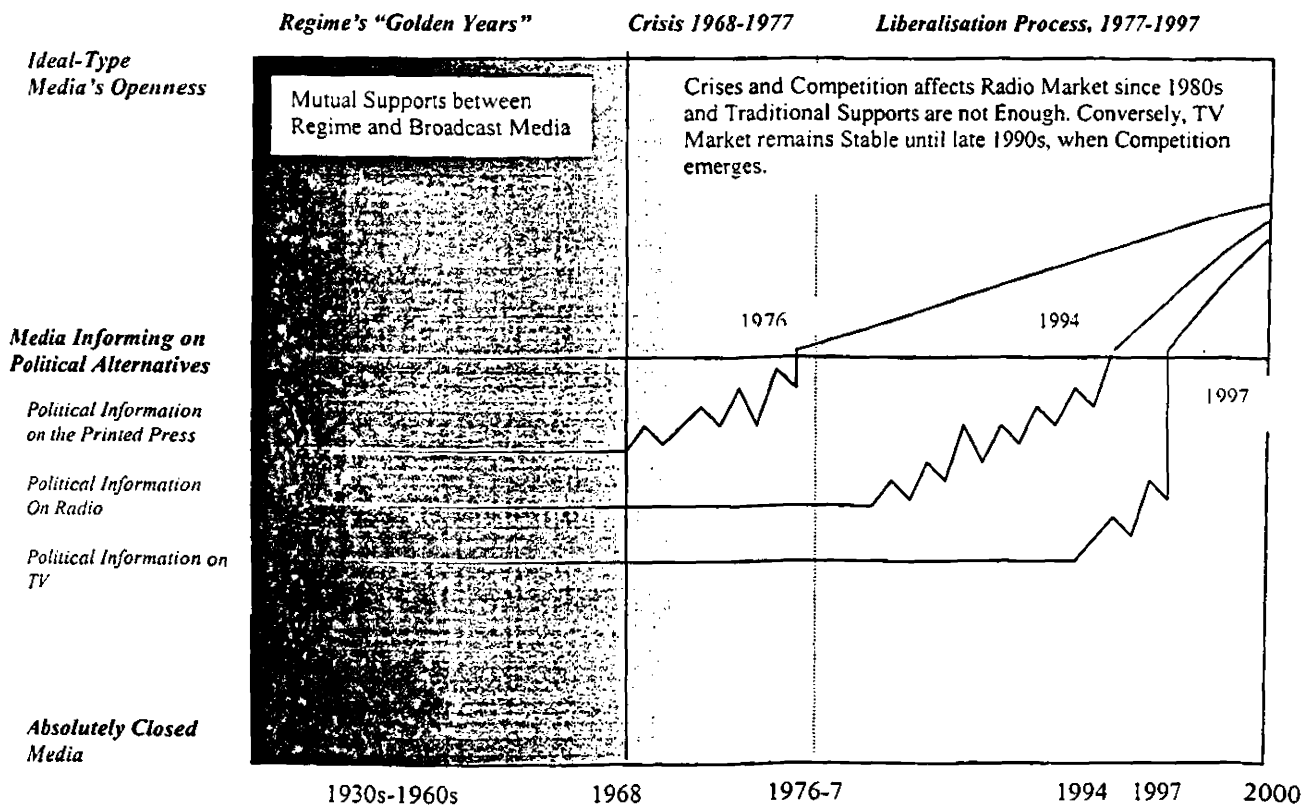
⁵⁰ Juan J. Linz, "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain", in Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan (eds.), *Mass Politics: Studies in Political Sociology*, New York, Free Press, 1970.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.255.

profitable business and survive in the market. Democracy became a good business, and good businesses suddenly supported democracy.

In brief, the combination of the above mentioned variables in the case of the broadcast media in Mexico permits me to sustain that *the openness of radio and television was led not by the rhythms of the political transition, but by the economic and corporate interests of the concessionaires in a context of crisis and competition*. The following Graphic A shows the media's presentation of information and news (in *Italics*) in Mexico both before and during the political liberalisation process. As can be seen, the openness of the broadcast media began later than on the press and at a time when the liberalisation process was already well under way. And it is noticeable also that there are interesting differences between radio and television in the ways they started to open spaces for alternative political actors and voices.

Graphic A
Mass Media's Forms of Presenting News and Information in Mexico
 (The darker the shade the greater the capacity of the regime to exercise control)



Before discussing the particular features of the *abertura* on radio and on TV, it is important to mention an important aspect of the Mexican transition. More than a complete authoritarianism, the Mexican regime was characterised by a limited political pluralism and a limited socio-economic demand articulation through corporatist relations designed—or accepted and tolerated—by the State.⁵² Mass mobilisation was organised and channelled through institutional arrangements within the official party and this was crucial for limiting popular demands and maintaining socio-political stability.⁵³ There also existed a large variety of formal and informal restrictions to create autonomous and independent organisations to articulate political and economic preferences. Corporatism became a means of exchange and of control at the same time, leaving little capacity for the mobility of those organisations that challenged the rules.

In the case of popular sectors, it was the regime who incorporated them “from above” within the party, with their consequent loss of autonomy.⁵⁴ They had very limited ability for independent manoeuvring and limited strength for formulating their own demands. Their incorporation meant a political control that lowered their active participation in the system as autonomous social actors since it hindered any possibility for independent leadership or for elaborating an alternative mass political project to the regime's.⁵⁵ This control also aimed at reducing the number of demands, depoliticising them and transforming them into bureaucratic and administrative matters. It was always easier to deal with administrative problems than facing political demands.⁵⁶

⁵² The most accepted definition of corporatism—that of Professor Philippe C. Schmitter—defines it as “a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of their demands and supporters” (P.C. Schmitter, “Still the Century of Corporatism?”, in Schmitter and Gerhard Lembruch (eds.), *Trends Towards Corporatist Intermediation*, London, Sage, 1979, p.13).

⁵³ According to Vincent Padgett the “interiorisation” of history—especially through all mass media and the educational system—contributed to the acceptance of the political regime since this is seen as the result of the national history (*The Mexican Political System*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966, first chapter).

⁵⁴ One of the most notorious features of the official party was its great capacity to mobilise large numbers of its sectorial affiliates for all kind of political acts, meetings and events in its support. However, most of this participation may have been induced or incentivated through a variety of means ranging from rewards to penalties for those who did not attend.

⁵⁵ José Luis Reyna, *Control político, estabilidad y desarrollo en México*, Mexico City, Centro de Estudios Sociológicos, El Colegio de México, CES Working Paper, n.3, 1974, p.10.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.25.

In the case of autonomously created organisations –like some political parties or entrepreneurial organisations—they had to conform to the rules the regime imposed, with little possibility of altering those rules.⁵⁷ However, the most salient feature of the regime was its impressive ability to incorporate diverse groups and organisations and to develop different kinds of exchange relations with them. The regime gave them legal recognition, subsidies, and a wide variety of direct and indirect benefits in exchange for their support, or their passive acceptance of the rules of the game. In general, this scheme worked well for the incorporation through corporatism of the most salient organised groups of society (whether the regime organised them “from above” or whether they organised by themselves, but had to accept the regime’s rules). Only in those cases where these exchange relations were not enough to maintain the *status quo*, the regime resorted to more open measures of control that ranged from very a subjective enforcement of the law to more repressive measures, though open repression was normally the exception and not the rule.⁵⁸

As many authors agree, perhaps the sector which benefited most from the economic growth and the re-distributive policies of the regime in the period between 1950 and 1970 were the new urban middle classes.⁵⁹ These sectors, which were not incorporated neither into the party nor into formal organisations directly linked to the regime, satisfied their demands of social and economic mobility through the re-distributive policies of the State.⁶⁰ During the period 1950-1970, these middle classes greatly profited from the economic transformations and the expansion of public services and became also the main source of human resources

⁵⁷ As is discussed in Chapters One and Two, radio and TV entrepreneurs organised in the powerful National Chamber of Radio and Television that successfully negotiated their economic interests before the State. However, the limits to their power were on the political side, since in exchange for those economic benefits they committed their support to the regime’s legitimacy and promotion.

⁵⁸ Reyna, (1974), p.10.

⁵⁹ See: Héctor Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer, *A la sombra de la Revolución mexicana*, México City, Ed. Cal y Arena, Sixth Ed., 1991; Enrique De la Garza, *Ascenso y crisis del Estado social autoritario*, Mexico City, El Colegio de México, 1989; Soledad Loaeza, “Las clases medias mexicanas y la coyuntura económica actual”, in *México ante la crisis*, Mexico City, Siglo XXI, Vol. II, 1985; Francisco López Cámara, *La clase media en la era del populismo*, Mexico City, Miguel Angel Porrúa/UNAM Colección *Las Ciencias Sociales*, 1988.

⁶⁰ These middle sectors grew from being 16.6 percent of the population in 1950 to 23.4 percent in 1970 (Claudio Stern, “Notas para la delimitación de las clases medias en México”, in Loaeza, Soledad and Claudio Stern, *Las clases medias en la coyuntura actual*, CES Working Paper, no.33, Mexico City, El Colegio de México, 1990, p.23). In terms of income, these sectors increased their share from 36.5 percent in 1950 to 43.5 percent in 1970 (Enrique Hernández Laos and Jorge Córdoba Chávez, “Estructura de la distribución del ingreso en México”, in *Comercio Exterior*, no.5, May 1979, p.12).

for the constantly growing bureaucratic apparatus and the public service.⁶¹ This expansion of the State apparatus, and of its re-distributive policies, within a context of economic growth and development, from which even the popular sectors benefited,⁶² generated a society that, in general terms, grew confident on the paternalistic State structures. A natural consequence of this situation was that for a long time, the votes for opposition parties were better explained due to unconformity and protest against the regime's performance—in the social and economic spheres—than to a conscious vote linked to opposition parties' loyalties. As one author stresses, it is noticeable that "the record shows that decades of growth produced comparatively limited pressures for democracy in Mexico and more limited results, [and that] the strongest calls for democratization have come since growth had reversed".⁶³ This is precisely the point: during the decades of growth (up to the 1970s), the regime was successful in *limiting* the development of autonomous organisations from its corporatist network due to a combination of re-distributive policies and eventually other more repressive measures. The outcome was that most of all independent and autonomous civil society organisations were weakly structured. Instead, what could be clearly seen was a society whose most salient sectors and organisations were, either directly or indirectly, linked to the regime, and thus habituated to economic, social and political paternalism. Let me link this point to the aim of this work.

This thesis's objective is to discuss the conditions that have moved the media into openness, and it asserts that such conditions have essentially been economic factors, not the transition which, at most have been a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for *abertura*. But there is a previous question that requires an answer here: why has this media remained essentially closed during most of the transition? An answer may be found in this thesis: because as long as the regime granted certain economic benefits to the licensees they would never *attempt to challenge* it by pressing for openness and democratisation.⁶⁴ The licensees

⁶¹ Francisco López Cámara, *El desafío de la clase media*, Mexico City, Cuadernos de Joaquín Mortiz, 1971, p.47.

⁶² The workers who belonged to unions were granted, at least, minimum salaries, social security, a maximum of labour hours and the security of maintaining the jobs. See Jorge Basurto, "Obstáculos al cambio en el movimiento obrero", in *El perfil de México en 1980*, vol.3, Mexico City, Ed. Siglo XXI, 1970, p.54.

⁶³ Daniel C. Levy, "Mexico: sustained civilian rule without democracy", in Linz, Juan J., Larry Diamond and Seymour M. Lipset (eds.), *Democracy in Developing Countries*, vol.4, *Latin America*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989, p.486.

⁶⁴ A different thing is to see if in such case they could have been successful, since there existed also a wide variety of mechanisms of media control in the hands of the regime.

accepted an exchange of political support for economic benefits. This may be clearly seen, especially in chapters one and two, which analyse the different economic supports provided by the regime to the private media and the political loyalty that the latter were keen to offer the regime in exchange for such benefits. However, this is only part of the answer –the part of the answer that matters in this study is the discussion of the reasons that explain the recent openness of the broadcast media. The other part of the answer that must be given in order to understand the whole context of the media in Mexico has to do with the absence of consistent and organised “pressures from below” in the Mexican transition.⁶⁵ The transition in Mexico has been almost exclusively centred since the beginning on the expansion of the electoral arena and the role of the parties in it, leaving in a secondary place the role of the “civil society”, which has been extremely weak in articulating demands and pressing for democratisation. Under such circumstances, and perhaps with few exceptions, like in Chihuahua’s 1986 election and the calls of 1988 PAN’s Presidential candidate, Manuel Clouthier, to veto Televisa’s news broadcasts,⁶⁶ civil society has not been capable of transforming itself into a real interlocutor before the media. If one considers that the political communication triangle is conformed by the interaction among the political system, the mass media and civil society (which demands accountability and responsibility from the formers), and in the case of Mexico civil society has been weakly structured, then we realise that the mass media have not faced other counterparts but the political system. The “dialogue” established between the media and the regime, excluding civil society, which was not able to become a real counterpart in such dialogue between the media and the regime for decades. In this way, though the main hypothesis of this work is that the conditions that moved the broadcast media to openness was the new situation of economic competition in a wider context of crisis, one could also add that a condition for their closeness for decades besides the convenient economic exchange with the regime (which is analysed in the first two chapters) was the weakness of a civil society in demanding more autonomous and responsible information.⁶⁷ Let me briefly differentiate between the particular characteristics of the openness on radio and the openness on television.

⁶⁵ This feature of the Mexican transition will be fully discussed in Chapter Three.

⁶⁶ See Chapters Four and Five.

⁶⁷ This does not mean that people did not react positively when spaces were opened on the media, as in the case of talk-radio programmes where individuals could call and communicate their opinion on different subjects. Indeed, as Chapter Five states, when given the chance people “made use” of radio spaces. But this

Radio

The process of openness on the radio is rooted in two important changes that occurred in the 1980s. On the one hand, there was a wider adoption of innovative forms of broadcasting based on talk-radio formats and a positive reaction of the audiences to those programmes. These changes in the formats were introduced at first on AM stations due to the growing switching of audience's preferences for FM radio. On the other hand, those initial changes in the formats slowly gave way to changes –erratic and timid at first—in the content as well. As is discussed in Chapter Four, this eventual transformation on the contents has to do mainly with the competition among a growing number of stations in a decreasing publicity market. It is interesting to note also how the regime reacts against these experiments on radio. A whole variety of mechanisms for controlling the content of the programmes were used, but the most recurrent practice was to call up the stations from either the Office of the Presidency or the Secretariat of *Gobernación*. The usual outcome was the dismissing of the newscasters or the temporary closure of the news broadcasts (since the stations re-scheduled them with different names). In spite of such pressures, some radio stations continued with their policy of openness since the ratings were rising and, in a context of economic depression and greater competition among the stations for advertisers, this would secure their economic survival. There also developed a market for hiring as newscasters important and renowned journalists, who were constantly moving from one station to another. As Chapter Eight shows this trend in the radio news broadcasts continued during the 1990s along with other important measures taken by the owners of the stations and networks at the financial level (merging with other stations, selling or buying shares, changing the programming of the stations, and so on) in order to adapt better to an increasingly competitive market. In this way, the Electoral Reform of 1996, which granted the parties the largest amount of resources ever to be invested on broadcast advertising, reinforced such *abertura* on the radio.

individual participation was not transformed into an organised or a consistent collective call for media's

Television

In the case of television, the openness with regard to political information and news, only began in 1997. In sharp contrast with what has been its traditionally closed handling of political information—even during periods of highly visible competence such as the elections of 1994—, since 1997 private television rapidly became a more independent source of political information. The explanation for this openness comes from the emergence of competition among TV networks that seriously altered the conditions of quasi-monopoly in which Mexican private TV developed for decades. In 1992 the public TV network, Imevisión, was privatised and renamed thereafter TV Azteca. But it was not until 1995-1996 that true competition between the two largest private consortiums—Televisa and TV Azteca—developed its hardest aspects. Competition forced both networks to implement new publicity policies, to be more careful in their investments, and to seek for new alliances in order to strengthen their positions and raise their ratings. Such competition among the networks also coincided with the replacing of all the top executives in Televisa after the death of the main share-holder, Emilio Azcárraga Milmo in April 1997, with new young executives led by Emilio Azcárraga Jean, who consistently showed that business, and not politics was the main occupation of the company. It was under such circumstances that the TV networks were already disputing the resources granted by the 1996 Electoral Law to the parties for advertising their positions before the 1997 elections. In this fashion, economic competition made the networks turn their heads towards the growing political pluralism, since it represented money and good business in a TV market in which the rivalry between the two networks became almost a zero-sum game.

This work is divided into three parts. **Part I** discusses two aspects of the relation between the broadcast media industry and the regime in its two chapters. Chapter One focuses on the nature of the mutual benefits that were exchanged between media entrepreneurs and the political regime. The regime provided strong support for the economic development of the commercial broadcast model and all facilities to the media entrepreneurs for running a profitable business in exchange for political collaboration. In this sense, the role of the news broadcasts was crucial for promoting a supportive image of the regime and silence on

openness from the society.

all relevant political debates and issues. However, the very same legislation and rulings that secured the media those economic benefits contained provisions for controlling broadcastings, from restrictions on the contents of programming to highly unclear procedures for awarding and revoking the licenses for operation, that served as ultimate resource for securing the political loyalty of broadcasters.

Chapter Two departs from a conceptualisation of the media businessmen as an interest group, and then goes on to discuss their creation of a National Chamber of the Radio Industry, their close links with some important PRI political groups, and the kind of pressure they used to obtain and preserve important economic gains. It also shows the limits of this pressure: the political sphere. At the end of the chapter, some impressions are given on the usage of a term such as "interest group" for encompassing all the licensees, since there were always important differences between Mexico City media entrepreneurs and the ones of other provinces.

Part II analyses the information policies taken by the media from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, i.e. during the political liberalisation process and the emergence of opposition organisations. Chapter Three describes the political liberalisation process and the growth of opposition parties in the context of the frequent economic crises of the 1980s. Chapter Four discusses how in this period private television reinforced its political support for the regime and its news broadcasts became almost public relations agencies for promoting the PRI and the presidents. In spite of the growing importance of opposition parties and actors, Televisa restricted all information on them on its screens. In exchange, it received various economic benefits, from preferential fiscal treatment to subsidies for sending its transmissions over the national terrestrial microwave network and on the Mexican satellite system. In this way, due to such supports and its quasi-monopoly over the domestic TV market, the crises did not affect Televisa. Conversely, Chapter Five shows how the crises forced a fierce competition for survival on the radio market. Among the changes that were implemented on the networks and stations was the adoption of new formats and eventually new programming that affected the contents of the news broadcasts as well. It was in this period that some radio stations decided to explore the limits of tolerance, since this was improving their ratings and their positions within the publicity market. However, though this

represented the first steps for openness on radio, such steps were still timid and inconsistent and they did not conform to the rule in Mexican radio.

Part III shows the information policies practised by the media in the period between 1994 and 2000, a time when the regime effectively lost the ultimate control over the electoral arena and true competition developed. Chapter Six describes these political changes and how the deep 1995 economic crisis prevented the maintenance of any political measure in which the regime could still have the ultimate control over political life. The Reform of 1996 was an outcome of this situation, and granted true competition.

Chapter Seven analyses how television abruptly moved from an almost absolute closeness on its screens to political openness after 1996. The “incentives” for such move are found mainly in the strong competition that emerged between the private networks Televisa and TV Azteca and their fight for the publicity market, including the enormous amount of resources granted to the parties by the Federal Electoral Institute for their political advertising before the crucial elections of 1997. Finally, Chapter Eight focuses on the deepening of the trend towards openness on the radio. The continuous growth in the number of stations, plus the negative economic effects of the 1995 crisis, increased the difficulties of many radio stations. The crisis dropped the publicity market share of the radio from 12 percent to 9.5 percent, and this became a crucial incentive for experimenting with all sorts of programme formulae, among which news broadcasts *abertura* was a successful one.

In **Final Remarks** is discussed the state of the art of the links between mass media and democracy in Mexico in the aftermath of the 2000 elections by considering the debate on the Right to Information in the country.

Part I

Traditional Links between the Mass Media and the Regime

Page 10

Page 11

Page 12

Page 13

Page 14

Page 15

Page 16

Page 17

Page 18

Page 19

Page 20

Page 21

Page 22

Page 23

Page 24

Page 25

Page 26

Page 27

Page 28

Page 29

Page 30

Page 31

Page 32

Page 33

Page 34

Page 35

Page 36

Page 37

Page 38

Page 39

Page 40

Page 41

Page 42

Page 43

Page 44

Page 45

Page 46

Page 47

Chapter One

The Commercial Media and the News Broadcasts

Since the mid-1930s, the Mexican post-revolutionary regime took up industrialisation as a major revolutionary goal through which economic development would be attained. For this purpose, modern entrepreneurial sectors were required and the regime provided for the conditions that would help to develop and strengthen them. As part of these sectors, broadcast media entrepreneurs received the support of the regime for profitably running their businesses for decades.

In exchange for granting favourable conditions for developing the commercial media model, the regime would secure a series of political controls over broadcasting. The news broadcasts played an important role here, since they served to promote a positive and supportive image of the regime while avoiding all relevant debates and information on politics. These mutually beneficial exchanges characterised the performance of the media for decades.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first one is a brief historical account of the conditions through which the private commercial model of broadcast media was finally adopted in México, and supported by some groups of the political elite. Though the regime kept a series of legal and political controls over broadcasting, it gave the media businessmen all the facilities to run highly profitable businesses. These benefits were exchanged for political support. For this –and here starts the second part—the role of the news broadcasts were crucial. These programmes served to present a supportive image of the regime and to avoid discussions on relevant political issues .

The Adoption of the Private Commercial Broadcast Model in Mexico

In Mexico, the broadcast media appeared in the early 1920s (Table 1.1). By the mid-1990s, nearly 98 percent of the population in the country had access to the radio.¹ In the case of TV, by the early 1990s out of a total 18 million households, Channel 2 could be seen in 12,528,500 homes; Channel 7 in 11,496,500 homes; Channel 13 in 9,844,200 homes; Channel 5 in 8,142,900 homes; and Channel 4 in 3,196,400 homes.²

Table 1.1
Number of Radio and TV stations in operation in Mexico, 1921-1995

Year	Radio Stations	Television Stations
1921	4	-
1930	32	-
1940	113	-
1950	195	1
1960	369*	21
1970	603	78
1980	848	285**
1990	1045	568***
1995	1291	542****

*In 1952 started to operate the FM radio stations. In 1960 there were 10 FM stations.

**This figure includes 172 commercial TV channels, 2 cultural channels and the 110 channels that composed the public network *Televisión de la República Mexicana* (TRM).

¹ Fernando Mejía Barquera. "Historia mínima de la radio mexicana", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas (coord.), *Apuntes para una historia de la radio mexicana*, Mexico City, RMC/Espacio, 1999a, p.1.

² Antonio E. Zarur Osorio. *El Estado y el modelo de televisión adoptado en México, 1950-2000*, Mexico City, Metropolitan Autonomous University, 1996, p.114. Channels 2, 4 and 5 belong to *Televisa*. By that time the other two channels belonged to the State through IMEVISION, an organisation that operated the State TV facilities. During the Salinas administration (1988-1994) these two channels were privatised.

***This figure includes 215 commercial channels under concession, 25 "complementary" channels —i.e. channels that serve only to link the re-transmission television stations of the networks with the telecommunications system—and the 328 public channels under permission.

****The number includes 379 commercial channels operated under concession, 61 complementary channels and 102 public channels under permission. These are 1994 figures.

Source: For radio stations, the information was taken from Fernando Mejía Barquera, "Historia mínima de la radio mexicana", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas (coord.), *Apuntes para una historia de la radio mexicana*, Mexico City, RMC/Espacio, 1999a. For television stations, the information was taken from Fernando Mejía Barquera, "Historia mínima de la televisión mexicana", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas (coord.), *Apuntes para una historia mínima de la televisión mexicana*, Mexico City, RMC/Espacio, 1998.

Though there is a dispute over who the first broadcaster was, the first broadcasting transmissions took place in 1921. Two different broadcasts were made in September 27th that year. One by the supervisor of Radio-electric Stations of the General Department of Telegraphs, Agustín Flores, and his assistant José Valdovinos, who used public facilities for his transmission.³ The other, by the young Adolfo E. Gómez Fernández and his brother.⁴ However, it was a third one, in October, that the people linked to the industry of radio and television consider to be the first broadcast in Mexico: that made by the engineer Constantino de Tárnava in the city of Monterrey.⁵

Private broadcasting was permitted by obtaining a license. Since 1943 there had been two kinds of licenses: the "concessions" and the "permissions". Concessions are given to individuals or companies who want to exploit commercially the radioelectric frequencies. Permissions are given to individuals and organisations who want to use them for cultural or educational purposes without profit. Already in 1922 there was a long list of people who wanted to get a license for radio. A year later, there appeared the first commercial radio stations in Mexico, the CYL owned by Raúl Azcárraga Vidaurreta in association with the newspaper *El Universal*, and the CYB, owned by the cigar firm "El Buen

³ Rosalía Velázquez Estrada, "El Estado y la radiodifusión", *Connotaciones*, no.1, Mexico City, 1981, p.80.

⁴ Fátima Fernández Christlieb, *Los medios de difusión masiva en México*, 10th Edition, Mexico City, Juan Pablos, 1996, p.238.

⁵ His transmission was registered on October 27th 1921. It is possible that the fact that his name appears as the pioneer of radio transmission is due to his personal links with the nascent commercial radio industry and to what was later the Azcárraga group. See Enrique Sánchez Ruiz, "Orígenes de la radiodifusión en México. Desarrollo Capitalista y el Estado", in *Huella*, no.9, Guadalajara, ITESO, 1984, p.9.

Tono”.⁶ During its first decade, most radio stations were founded in association with commercial branches of American firms such as General Electric, RCA or Marconi. These firms and their Mexican associates obviously favoured the development of the industry along the commercial patterns of the American radio. In the absence of proper regulations, advertising became a *de facto* way to finance the radio. The first ads were aimed at promoting the products of the firms that owned the stations –i.e. “El Buen Tono” cigars.⁷ The programming was also quite similar to transmissions in the U.S., i.e. music and radio soap operas. Thus, by the end of that decade, the commercial model had been imposed as the dominant practice.

The most important commercial radio station in Mexico, XEW, owned by Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta, began operating in 1930. The shareholders of this new station were Azcárraga with 12.25% of the shares, and the Mexico Music Company, with the remaining 87.75%.⁸ Since the law prohibited that foreigners could obtain radio concessions (but not in participating in the constitution of radio networks) the control was handed over to Azcárraga, who immediately affiliated the XEW to the National Broadcasting Network (NBC), RCA’s radio division. The major expansion of Azcárraga to the rest of the country soon followed. In 1938 there were not only fourteen stations affiliated to the XEW-NBC, but by October of that year Azcárraga started operating another station, XEQ, which this time he affiliated to the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) –which by 1945 included seventeen other stations.⁹ His two radio stations were the most important in the country and in 1941 Azcárraga decided to go into business with the entrepreneur Clemente Serna to establish the organisation Radio Programmes of Mexico (RPM). That same year RPM created the first national radio network, the “Azul

⁶ This firm had been founded with French capital from the “Société Financière pour l’industrie au Mexique”, which had links also with the Moctezuma Brewery (origin of the powerful industrial Monterrey Group), in which the father of the engineer De Tárnava worked, and with the Laredo National Bank, owned by the Briton Patrick Milmo, whose daughter married Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta, brother of Raúl Azcárraga.

⁷ According to a study, it was the CYB in 1929 the first station to cover its expenses and obtain some profits through commercial advertising. See Patricia Arriaga, *Publicidad, economía y comunicación masiva. Estados Unidos y México*, Mexico City, CEESTEM, 1980, (p.224).

⁸ Since the early 1920s Azcárraga was the manager of the Mexico Music Co., which was a branch of RCA. Mexico Music Co. dedicated to selling gramophones and plates and to the distribution of the products of the RCA.

⁹ Luis A. de Noriega and F. Leach, *Broadcasting in Mexico*. Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1979, p.7.

Network" leaded by the XEQ –which was part of the Americas Network of the CBS. RPM affiliated in a brief space of time more than 80 radio stations, including stations in other South American countries.¹⁰ By the late 1940s RPM was not the only radio network, there was also the BBC, the Mutual Broadcasting System (which owned the Radio Mil Network) and the French station XEB (the old CYB), which was joined by 20 other stations in the early 1940s. However, the strongest voice in Mexico's commercial radio was Azcárraga's.¹¹ Moreover,

The radio gave him the possibility to integrate his businesses: he produced radio and sold the sets, he popularised singers, recorded their plates and not only sold them, but also the gramophones on which the plates were played. This strategy of vertical and horizontal integration of his businesses would be a constant in the future firms of the Azcárraga family...

The Mexican radio model, from which the XEW was the indisputable pillar, followed basically the paths imposed by the American one based on the private exploitation of the medium with totally commercial aims.¹²

The development of commercial stations did not prevent the government from operating its own stations and from granting concessions to politically organised groups, linked to it, and to some public dependencies.¹³ The CZE radio station, operated by the Secretariat of Public Education, began broadcasting in November 1924. Its aims were to support the education policy in the rural world and also to disseminate the ideology of the revolution. Shortly afterwards many other public stations emerged controlled by different organisations and dependencies, from "official working unions", like the CROM, to the Secretariat of Industry, Commerce and Labour, the Secretariat of War and Navy, and the recently founded official party, the National Revolutionary Party (PNR), whose station, XEFO, was inaugurated in December 31st 1930. XEFO was used to disseminate the

¹⁰ Arriaga, (1980), p.226.

¹¹ For instance: Karin Bohmann, *Medios de comunicación y sistemas informativos en México*, Mexico City, Alianza Editorial, reprinted 1997 (1986); Fernández Christlieb, (1996); Pablo Arredondo Ramírez and Enrique E. Sánchez Ruiz, *Comunicación social, poder y democracia en México*, 2nd Ed., Mexico, University of Guadalajara, 1987; De Noriega and Leach, (1979).

¹² Zarur Osorio, (1996), pgs.17-18.

¹³ Arredondo Ramírez and Sánchez Ruiz, (1987), p.96.

doctrine of the party, general news on political affairs and the governmental programmes, but it also transmitted some programmes on literature and arts for educational purposes.¹⁴

Other public stations appeared in the 1930s, like those of the Secretariat of *Gobernación* (the Ministry of the Interior) and the National University, named "Radio University XEXX" and founded, as the former, in 1937. By 1940 there were fourteen public radio stations, the highest number they would reach until the 1970s. The increase in their number was part of a conscious project—for the first and only time—for using public radio with some concrete purposes. Under President Cárdenas (1934-1940) the public radio stations were considered as educational tools and their programmes included lessons on agriculture, on labour legislation, on national problems, but also on music, book reviews, and other cultural contents.¹⁵

Radio was an important part of the *Cardenista* political project of incorporating and educating the masses. However, the ideological aims were not left out of the government project. Public stations were used as an influential means for government propaganda. For instance, during February and March 1938 the public radio stations were calling for support in favour of the nationalisation of the oil companies, and later in May they were used to discredit the *cedillista* rebellion in the state of San Luis Potosí.

However, as the *Cardenista* administration ended, the public radio project was cancelled by his successor in the presidency, Manuel Avila Camacho (1940-1946), and no other public media project was to be developed until the 1970s. Moreover, the government of Avila Camacho sold some of the public stations and the few that remained under public control lacked any co-ordination policies and project. A further reason to dismantle the public radio project, beyond the ideological differences between the Cárdenas and the

¹⁴ At first the official party station, XEFO, transmitted every Monday evening, a programme dedicated to each state of the country; on Tuesdays, it transmitted programmes dedicated to rural and peasant topics; on Wednesdays, it was the turn for working class programmes; on Thursdays, some concerts were aired and the programmes were dedicated to topics of interest for industrial and commercial entrepreneurs; on Fridays, they transmitted history comments and other topics related to the Revolution; finally on Saturdays, the programmes were dedicated to children and housewives with topics which included cooking classes and child care. (See Mejía Barquera, *La industria de la radio y la televisión y la política del Estado mexicano*, vol. I, Mexico City, Fundación Manuel Buendía, 1989, pgs.55-56). However, when President Miguel Alemán took office he privatised this radio station.

¹⁵ Luis Esparza Oteo, *La política cultural del Estado mexicano y el desarrollo de la televisión*, Mexico City, SEP, 1981, pgs.17-18.

Avila Camacho administrations, was the high cost involved in their maintenance.¹⁶ For example, the arguments given by the government to sell the largest public radio-telegraphic station, the *Chapultepec* Station, were the impossibility of paying for the enormous amount of energy that it consumed.¹⁷ During the administration of President Miguel Alemán (1946-1952), even the XEFO, the radio station of the PRI was privatised. In any case, without a public media project, the way was open for the commercial model to consolidate almost by default, but it counted then on the explicit support of the regime.

During the 1940s the project of public radio was replaced by the strong support that some groups of the political elite gave to the private commercial media model, especially during the administration of President Alemán. However, during the 1930s the government showed particular interest in participating in the development of television. In the following decade these plans were all abandoned, and television followed the same commercial pattern as radio.¹⁸

During the presidency of Alemán a decisive boost was given to private business in general, and the media entrepreneurs profited out of these opportunities also. Apparently, when the advent of television was imminent, President Alemán formed a commission headed by the poet and writer Salvador Novo, and by the engineer González Camarena, to study the two most important television alternatives at that moment, the commercial model (the American model) and the public model (the British model). The commission started its research in 1947 and handed in its report in October 18th 1949.¹⁹ This report was divided into two parts. In the first one, Novo after describing both systems, discretely praises the British BBC model for the quality of its programming. In the second, González Camarena, in a more technical style, considers that for both technical and

¹⁶ Marvin Alisky, "Early Mexican Broadcasting", in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol.34, no.4, November 1954, p.523.

¹⁷ Mejía Barquera, (1989), p.23.

¹⁸ It must be remembered that it was in the party radio station XEFO where González Camarena—who was a technician in the Department of Radio of the Secretary of Public Education between 1932 and 1939—received support from President Cárdenas to continue his experiments on TV.

¹⁹ This report remained classified and confidential for more than thirty years (though the law establishes that no document can remain classified and confidential for more than 20 years). It may now be consulted in the Nation General Archives (Ramo Presidentes, Acervo Miguel Alemán, expediente 523/14).

economic reasons the American model is more convenient (he had some personal interests in obtaining a concession, which he got a few years later).

It seems that President Alemán was personally more in favour of the commercial model even before reading the results of this report, since he gave the first concession to operate a TV station, XHTV Channel 4 on October 7th 1949, eleven days *before* the report was shown to him.²⁰ As one author underlines, "the decision to adopt the American model, with its functional differences, was conditioned by the scheme developed by the radio in twenty years of history, based both on the commercial exploitation of such media and on the relationship that existed between radio entrepreneurs and some important politicians..."²¹

The concession for operating the first private TV station, Channel 4, was awarded to the firm *Televisión de México, S.A.*, property of Rómulo O'Farrill, a personal friend of the president, who had already obtained the concession of the XEX radio station in 1947 and owned the newspaper *Novedades* since 1948.²² Channel 4 started its broadcasts in

²⁰ Here it must be noted that private entrepreneurs had been trying to obtain television concessions since 1946 (Azcárraga among them), but the government of Ávila Camacho decided not to precipitate and all decisions in this field were postponed until the administration of Alemán. The preference of Alemán for the commercial television model was not only consistent with the dominant model in radio, but also with his own interests in becoming (as he did) personally involved in the development of that business.

²¹ Zarur Osorio, (1996), pgs.32-33.

²² In 1936 *Novedades* was founded by Ignacio P. Herrerías. During the government of President Ávila Camacho (1940-1946), this newspaper became the subject of the ambitions of some important political groups who wanted to take direct control of it. There seems to be some proof that the brother of President Ávila Camacho, Maximino, who was Secretary of Communications and Transports in his brother's cabinet, was interested in purchasing the paper. However, the Secretary of *Gobernación*, Miguel Alemán, who was to become the next president, was more successful in imposing final control on *Novedades* through his very close friend Rómulo O'Farrill, Rómulo O'Farrill Jr., and his son Miguel Alemán Velasco (who participated later on in the new-born TV industry). U.S. Embassy in Mexico, "Confidential Letter from the U.S. Embassy in Mexico to the Secretary of State, August 29th 1944" in Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files, *Mexico. Internal Affairs, 1940-1944. Part II: Social, Economic, Industrial, Communications, Transportation and Science*, Frederick, MD, University Publications of America, 1986, document file 812.911/8-2944, Reel 64.

According to this same document, the original intentions of the President were to establish a daily newspaper in Mexico City at the beginning of his administration, but the editors of the four leading papers in Mexico (*Excelsior*, *El Universal*, *La Prensa* and *Novedades*) became very alarmed about such an idea and presented the president with a proposal: if he would give up his plan of establishing a paper, turn PIPSA (the official import and distributor of newsprint paper for the press) into the hands of these papers to operate it as a co-operative semi-official organisation, they would pledge their support to him personally and to his administration (See *ibid.*, p.2). However, the interest of his brother for acquiring a newspaper seemed to continue along his term.

September 1st 1950 with the transmission of the Annual Government's Report to the Congress.

Shortly afterwards, in 1951, the second commercial television station, XEW-TV Channel 2, started to operate (the concession was awarded in 1950 to the firm Televimex, S.A.). Channel 2 was owned by Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta, the radio magnate. Then in 1952, a third station, XHGC Channel 5, started operating. The concession of this channel was given to the engineer Guillermo González Camarena.²³ However, Channel 5 did not have enough resources to compete with the other two channels.²⁴

By 1952, O'Farrill and Azcárraga were expanding their television stations in other states outside Mexico City by obtaining most of the concessions offered by the State. Nevertheless at that time the real competition for advertising and publicity was taking place in Mexico City. By 1954, this competition was causing Channel 2 and Channel 4 some financial difficulties, which in the following year led them to merge their companies (along with González Camarena's Channel 5, that was already operating through the facilities of Channel 2) to create a single TV company. In March 23rd 1955 a new company was created, *Telesistema Mexicano, S.A. (TM)*, an amalgam of the three Channels.²⁵ The chairman of the new-company, Emilio Azcárraga, said then that,

Telesistema Mexicano S.A. is born as a defence mechanism of three enterprises that were losing many millions of Pesos. From now on, all programming will originate in Televisión, which will become the great TV central station. Within a year television will be the primary entertainment and publicity industry of the country; and it will even become more important than the film industry.²⁶

²³ González Camarena broadcasted some experimental programmes with an original equipment of his own creation since 1934. In 1935 President Cárdenas gave him the facilities of the official party radio station, XEFO, in order for him to continue his experiments. In 1940 he registered a trichromatic television system --television based on three colours, red, blue and green--and since 1947 he started working for Azcárraga as Chief of Operations. Fernando Mejía Barquera, "50 años de televisión comercial en México, (1934-1984). Cronología", in Raúl Trejo Delarbre (coord.), *Televisa, el quinto poder*, Mexico City, Claves Latinoamericanas, 1985, pgs.20-25.

²⁴ Emilio Esquivel Puerto, *Anecdotario de radio y televisión*, Mexico City, Publicidad Latina, 1970, p.151.

²⁵ The Administration Board was presided by Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta. The Shares of the new firm were as follows: 40% for Azcárraga, 40% for O'Farrill, 5% for Emilio Azcárraga Milmo, 5% for O'Farrill Naunde, 5% for Ernesto Barrientos (employee of Azcárraga) and 5% for Ernesto Díez Barroso (Azcárraga's son-in-law). However, though the operation of the channels was under the control of TM, the concessions were still under the names of the three original groups, since Article 28 of the Constitution prohibits the existence of private monopolies. Arredondo Ramírez and Sánchez Ruiz, (1987), p.119.

²⁶ Words of Emilio Azcárraga cited from *Boletín Radiofónico*, no.62, March 31st, 1965.

The expansion of TM started immediately, since that same year was created a subsidiary firm –*Teleprogramas de México*—to produce and to export TV programmes to other Latin American countries and to the US. Other local television station were affiliated to the consortium through its subsidiary firm *Televisoras de Provincia*, which by 1969 controlled 19 other channels in the country. In 1962, TM created, *Teleprogramas Acapulco*, with the aim of producing TV programmes under the direction of Miguel Alemán Velasco, son of the ex President. By that time, TM was already penetrating the Spanish speaking market in the US through the *Spanish International Network* (SIN).²⁷

This great expansion of private broadcasting, both of radio and television, was a direct product of the regime's support for that business, as discussed below. But this support was highly favoured by the concessionaires, who were eager –and successful—to convince the regime that there was no need to develop a strong public media network, since they could better serve the regime's interests with more efficiency. A good example of the concessionaires' (private licensees') willingness to be on the best possible terms with the president was the insistence in 1953 of *Radio Panamericana* –linked directly to the XEQ station that belonged to Azcárraga—on installing a radio broadcasting office directly in the presidential offices (the National Palace) for daily coverage on the presidential events and activities. The offer was made by Bernardo San Cristóbal, the manager of the XEQ, who besides offering to cover all the expenses of that station, proposed that it become more a public relations agency than an information source for the citizens. He explicitly proposed that all information would be taken directly from the official bulletins and other official information “that would be previously censored by the person [...] designed by the Department of Information and Press of the Presidency”.²⁸

²⁷ For a detailed account on the American businesses of TM –later Televisa—see Nicholas A. Valenzuela, “La invasión electrónica en Estados Unidos”, in Raul Trejo Delarbre (coord.), *Las redes de Televisa*, Mexico City, Claves Latinoamericanas, 1988.

²⁸ Cited in Mejía Barquera (1985), pgs.169-170. It was President Cárdenas who created the Autonomous Department of Press and Publicity (DAPP) in 1936, whose function was to centralise governmental information and to distribute all official information and bulletins to the mass media, both printed press and radio news broadcasts. President Ávila Camacho changed the name of the DAPP for General Direction of Information (DGI) and placed it within the Secretariat of *Gobernación*. President Alemán then decided to establish press departments within the structure of each official dependency and ministry in order to

But the good will of the concessionaires to graciously give the regime some support was not enough for the latter to feel secure about the loyalty of the concessionaires. The law was used by the government to secure such support from the start. The government wanted to make clear that: though private entrepreneurs were enabled to benefit and profit out of broadcast media concessions, the concessionaires must remain supportive of the regime and must promote a favourable image of it.

Since the Constitution of 1857, the general communication systems and roads were considered to be the property of the nation and, therefore, they became subjected to what was called "a concessions regime". The railways and the telegraph were all regulated through these concessions regime. The definition of the general communication systems as national assets subjected to concession was maintained in article 27 of the Constitution of 1917.²⁹ This same article states in paragraph six, that the domain of the nation over the natural resources is not alienable, and the exploitation, use and profit of them by private individuals or investing societies could only be done through legal federal concessions given by the Executive through the Secretariat of Communications and Transports (then called the Secretariat of Communications and Public Works).

The first legal framework that ruled the broadcast industry was the regulation of 1923. Three years later, in April 1926 President Calles issued the Law of Electric Communications (LEC), which refrained the public character of such services, including radio industry. Chapter VII of the LEC defined radio as "a public service";³⁰ established

elaborate the press bulletins containing the official information to be distributed for its publication. Years after in the late 1970s, during President López-Portillo administration (1976-1982), there was established a General Direction of Social Communication in each dependency instead of the older press departments, but with the same functions. In this way, the ministries and all public dependencies had an office dedicated to the distribution of information about their activities to the journalists and reporters.

²⁹ In 1926 the following sentence was added to Article 27, paragraph four (which enumerates the natural resources that belong to the nation): "...and the space situated above the national territory in the terms and extension that are specified by the International Law".

³⁰ This definition became very important, since it gave the State not only the ultimate control in terms of property -which was already established in Article 27 of the Constitution, which was also explicitly reformed that same year--, but more worrying for the broadcasters was the possibility of constant State interference in their business (especially establishing the ad tariffs), which would affect the commercial character of the programming and broadcasts. Though the government never needed to enforce this specific disposition or affected in any way the commercial character of the private radio stations, the sole definition of the radio as a public service was uncomfortable for the broadcasters since it was against the "commercial spirit" of their business. As will be seen below, in 1960 they were finally successful in changing this definition for another more suitable to their interests.

the conditions to operate and install radio stations and the permissions policy;³¹ and made it possible for the government to take over the stations in case of national emergency. It was maintained that only Mexicans or Mexican firms could obtain a radio concession, something that will be preserved along all further legislation.

Right from the start, the government wanted to be sure that radio would not be used by any alternative political force or group. Article 12 of the LEC restricted the political freedom of speech by explicitly prohibiting “the broadcast of any news or messages whose content challenge the security of the State, the public peace and order, the well manners (*buenas costumbres*), the laws of the country, the proper use of language, or may cause scandal or *attack in any form the constituted government*, private life, people’s honour, or that manifestly provoke the commission of unlawful acts, or obstruct justice”. In practice, it served to avoid the transmission of messages from political opposition groups.

In 1931 it was established that permissions were reserved only for non-profit-seeking stations, like the ones operated by public dependencies and universities; the concessions were reserved for commercial stations. Concessions, for commercially exploiting the radio, would be given for up to fifty years in order to make the investments in this activity more secure. In 1933 the regime issued a series of legal dispositions so as to have better control over broadcast contents. On July 10th there were published in the Official Daily of the Federation the *Reglamento de Vías Generales de Comunicación*. In the section devoted to radio, the regulation stated that the State had the faculty to freely broadcast through commercial stations any message that it considered worthy to make public. However, the most important restrictions for the broadcasters were specified in a section entitled “Forbidden Transmissions”, which ratified what has been stipulated in Article 12 of the LEC, i.e. that it was strictly forbidden to transmit any information or programme that may “attack in any form the constituted government” or to present information that may challenge the security of the State (Article 77 of the Regulation of 1933). Article 78 went even further in restricting political freedoms when stating that it

³¹ Which was dependant on evaluations made by the Ministry of Communications and Public Works, therefore depending on the Executive power, namely the President.

was “also forbidden to broadcast, in any open or veiled form, all kinds of personal, political or religious affairs”.³² Evidently, this does not mean that politics was alien to radio broadcasting, since the regime not only used its own stations for transmitting its political propaganda, but also the private stations. The political exclusion was for all opposition groups.

The basic provisions for securing the regime the ultimate control over broadcasting were thus established in the 1930s. Until 1960 all further legislation on the media sought essentially to promote the development of the industry, to provide it with technical facilities and to secure the commercial character of the radio. The basic agreement between the broadcast media and the regime was settled: the government would promote the development and expansion of these private businesses—in recognition of the commercial broadcast media in Mexico—, in exchange for the media’s support and the promotion of the favourable image of the regime. This did not exclude the possibility for the concessionaires to advance their economic interests by other means. The following section shows how the news broadcasts played a crucial role in this agreement on mutual supports between the media and the regime.

Presenting Political Information: From Political Support to Balanced Compromise

Maybe the most obvious aspect through which the mass media’s political support for the regime could be seen was in the way in which they presented political information on the news broadcasts. News broadcasts reflected the concessionaires’ collaboration and compromise with the regime through the presentation of information in ways that contributed both to its positive image and to maintaining a general political apathy by leaving out of discussion all relevant and controversial political debates. With time, however, the news broadcasts acquired another complementary purpose. Since the 1960s,

³² The complete Article 78 prohibited also the broadcasting of false information. However, the most important prohibition for the purposes of this work were the restrictions related to political information referred to above. It may be noted that these political restrictions on information existed since the first regulation of 1923, but the prohibition on dealing with religious affairs was added due to the inconvenience caused by dealing with such issues in a time when the religious conflicts—incarnated in the Cristero War, 1926-1929—were still freshly recalled.

with a completely consolidated private media structure, new technological developments, and in the context of the 1968 political crisis, the news broadcasts showed not only the concessionaires' political support of the regime, but they were increasingly used to promote a corporate rationale according to the concessionaires' economic interests. This section discusses precisely these characteristics of the news broadcasts in Mexico.

As Ben Bagdikian has noted, "for most of the people of the world, for most of the events of the world, what the news systems do not transmit did not happen. To that extent, the world and its inhabitants are what the news media say they are".³³ This sentence has proved to be quite an accurate description of our modern day reality. The mass media, as information gatekeepers,³⁴ define what the news is, how it is transmitted and what is politically, economically and socially significant. Though the extent to which they can influence an individual's ideas, attitudes and behaviour is still debatable, the media have the capacity of emitting the message and show a specific version of reality as the "whole reality". According to Gaye Tuchman, in the same fashion as important decisions are taken within the government, the selection and presentation of the news is an elite function —editors, journalists, media executives and, in the case of private media, the licensees.³⁵ The decision to present or suppress certain information takes into account the interests of the dominant economic sectors, but also those of certain relevant groups of the political elite. The usual outcome is the media's support for the overall dominant capitalist economy, that is seldom submitted to serious scrutiny and criticism.³⁶

As Iyengar and Kinder show in their famous study on American television: the information presented on the mass media —whatever it is—is framed by dominant values

³³ Ben Bagdikian, *The Information Machines*, New York, Harper & Row, 1971, pgs. xii-xiii.

³⁴ The "Gatekeeping Theories" on the mass media analyse the way in which the media institutions select, choose and edit the materials to be presented to the audiences focusing essentially on the interaction among the members of the media organisations. See for example P.M. Hirsch, "Occupational, Organizational and Institutional Models in Mass Communications", in P.M. Hirsch et al., *Strategies for Communication Research*, London, Sage, 1977. And A. Hetherington, *News, Newspapers and Television*, London Macmillan, 1985.

³⁵ Gaye Tuchman, *Making News*, New York, Free Press, 1978.

³⁶ Martin N. Marger, "The Mass Media as a Power Institution", in Marvin E. Olsen and M.N. Merger (eds.), *Power in Modern Societies*, Boulder CO., Westview Press, 1993, p.243. See also Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality. The politics of the Mass Media*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1986 and W. Lance Bennett, *News. The Politics of Illusion*, New York, Longman, 1988.

and shaped by power elites, and this brings into question all pretensions of objectivity.³⁷ However, and maybe this is the key point, in a democratic regime this bias in the content of the media to favour dominant values and structures is not the outcome of *an explicit conspiracy* between the media at large and the government elite—though certain informal and covered agreements might be reached between single groups on certain specific issues—, but is more the product of a mutual sharing of values and beliefs that is largely unconscious.³⁸ The degree of “explicitness” in the agreements between media and political elites makes a difference between democratic and authoritarian regimes. In the latter cases, what is presented on the media could very well be the result of explicit agreements on, at least, the kind of information that should not, or must not, be transmitted.

As Linz has noted, one of the most salient characteristics of a stabilised authoritarian regime is the lack of extensive and intensive political mobilisation of the population. In his own words, “the common citizen expresses little enthusiastic support for the regime in elections, referenda and rallies. Rather than enthusiasm or support, the regime often expects—even from office holders and civil servants—passive acceptance, or least their refrain from public anti-government activity”.³⁹ It is possible, then, to talk about the existence of a political apathy among the population in these limited pluralistic polities. Under such circumstances, *the mass media may perfectly well be playing a crucial role in the presentation of political information and material, in ways that help preserve this political apathy among the population at large.* On this point some comments must be made.

The pretension here is not to build on the old debate of mass communication theory that refers to the capacity (or lack of it) of the media to influence directly on the behaviour of individuals.⁴⁰ In this respect, one must only recall the work of Joseph Klapper—*The*

³⁷ Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News That Matters: American Television and Public Opinion*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987.

³⁸ The argument that political objectivity does not mean political neutrality in the news has been defended by Herbert J. Gans (*Deciding What's News*, New York, Pantheon, 1979).

³⁹ Juan J. Linz, “An Authoritarian Regime: Spain”, in Erick Allardt and Stein Rokkan, (eds.) *Mass Politics: Studies in Political Sociology*, New York, Free Press, 1970, p.255.

⁴⁰ The pioneer studies on this line of thought were inaugurated by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet during the 1940s in the University of Columbia, who analysed the possible effects of the media on individuals

Effects of Mass Communications—in which the author concludes that: a) Mass communication is not a sufficient nor a necessary cause of the effects on audiences; and, b) the mass media work more often as reinforcing agents, than as agents of change.⁴¹ For the purposes of this work it is enough to remain at the level of the elaboration and the presentation of the messages, since the aim is to show the collaboration of the media with the regime through presenting a positive image of it, through refraining from promoting any relevant debate on controversial political matters, and through restricting spaces to any other alternative political expression. Therefore, the discussion on the extent to which such messages and other political information presented to the audiences were actually influential or not remains outside the scope of this work.

For Linz, under an authoritarian regime, the media may vary greatly in autonomy, even under the same regime, since the limited pluralism that exists readily generates some “islands of exemption” on which certain kinds of publications, (like church publications in Spain, or academic material in Mexico) remain free from government censorship.⁴² In Mexico, in the case of the licensees, called concessionaires, their relative autonomy and power to negotiate their interests will be discussed in the next chapter. Here it is important to remark on their relative autonomy and their explicit collaboration with the regime that help to explain the content of the news broadcasts to be not by an overt imposition of the regime over the media, but as the outcome of the mutual support, which they gave each other. This is why, more than talking about a one-sided control of the regime over the media, in the case of Mexico, it is more accurate to talk about a more or

during election campaigns. Their work showed the following results (*The Peoples' Choice*, N.Y., Columbia University Press, 1944):

- a) Very few individuals' ideas are changed during campaigns, and therefore the influential power of the media is limited only to reinforcing previous ideas.
- b) The campaigns have little effect and they reach mainly those individuals who are already informed about politics.
- c) The most important influence on individuals does not come directly from the media, but indirectly through local opinion leaders.

Another important work on the limited effect of the media on individuals are reinforced in the very famous article of Bernard Berelson, “The State of Communication Research”, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, no.23, 1959.

⁴¹ Joseph Klapper, *The Effects of Mass Communications*, New York, Free Press, 1960, pgs.8 and 15. Klapper was pupil of Paul Lazarsfeld.

⁴² Linz (1970), p.266.

less explicit collaboration—not completely free from eventual disagreements on economic matters—between these media and the regime.

An aspect of that mutually beneficial *modus vivendi* was the presentation of political information and material in ways that favoured the promotion of political apathy. This was done mainly through transmitting a positive image of the regime, through refraining from promoting any relevant debate on controversial political matters and through closing their channels of communication to any alternative political discourse. These aspects served to present an impression of a country in which the only way to do politics was through the PRI and its various channels and organisations, in which any opposition was a challenge to order and stability, and in which, as an old saying goes, “it was better to leave politics to politicians”. Now it is time to see how the media accomplished such tasks on behalf of the regime.

As mentioned before, the Law of Electric Communications of 1926 explicitly prohibited to broadcast certain kind of political information and material (article 12), especially by any critic of the constituted regime. Legal restrictions on political information were maintained until the Federal Law on Radio and Television of 1960 (LFRT of 1960). However, politics—the official version of politics—were always present on the news broadcasts. As one scholar notes,

Actually, the political issues were never absent from the radio transmissions in those years [the 1930s and 1940s], however these kind of messages tended always to exalt the deeds of the so called *Revolutionary* regimes and to create a favourable image of the public officials, especially of the president of the republic. When in 1950 it started to work the commercial television, there was no law or disposition to regulate the content of its broadcasts... Nevertheless, the entrepreneurs who operated the first channels, and the publicity agencies that were in charge of the production of the programming, or the newspapers which then sponsored the information services in TV, all found *natural* that this new medium should keep the same attitude of the radio with respect to the political contents of the programmes.⁴³

With the advent of television, the government decided to secure its control over its contents. In December 1955 a reform of Articles 32 and 33 of the Regulation of 1937-42

was passed through which a stricter "technical supervision" was established over broadcasts by the Secretariat of Communications and Public Works. The reforms established that supervisory visits could be made at any time by officials of the Secretariat and that the cost of such visits was to be covered by the concessionaires. In case of "serious irregularities found by the visitors", the concession would be cancelled. Though this regulation moved the Chamber of the Industry of Radio (CIR) to protest, in reality this disposition was more a preventive measure intended to dis-incentivate the concessionaires from not attending the official positions, than a disposition intended to be effectively used. Actually it became another tool in the arsenal of the regime for employing only in special cases.

For almost forty years the news broadcasts on radio, and later on television, were sponsored by different private commercial ventures and produced by the newspapers, which made of these programmes a spoken extension of the printed press. Even the images that were shown during these programmes were pictures taken from the newspapers.⁴⁴ Radio stations and later TV channels sold air-time to different commercial sponsors who produced the news broadcasts with information provided by the most important newspapers, as *El Universal*, *Excelsior* or *Novedades*. The duration of the news broadcasts was very brief, mostly between ten and fifteen minutes, and even by 1969 the total transmission time that large TV companies, like TM, dedicated to its news broadcasts was only 0.35 percent of its daily air time.⁴⁵

The first regular TV news broadcast started in December 5th 1950. Its name was *Reading Novedades* and it was conducted by Gonzalo Castellot and transmitted on Channel 4.⁴⁶ It was aired at 10:00 p.m. every evening for fifteen minutes. Shortly afterwards there

⁴³ Fernando Mejía Barquera, "Televisión y política", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas and María del Pilar Ramírez (coords.), *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana II*, Mexico City, Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa, 1999b, pgs.24-25.

⁴⁴ José Luis Gutiérrez Espíndola, "Información y necesidades sociales/Los noticiarios de Televisa", in Trejo Delarbre, (1985), p.66.

⁴⁵ Francisco J. Martínez Medellín, *Televisa. Sigla la huella*, Mexico City, Claves Latinoamericanas, 1992, p.265.

⁴⁶ One must keep in mind that since the very first TV transmission politics were present with the transmission of the Presidential speech to the Congress and the Nation that Miguel Alemán gave in September 1st 1950. A little more than a month afterwards, in October 13th, a new programme, *Mesa*

appeared on Channel 2 the *Noticiero de las 7:45* that preceded the more famous *Noticiero General Motors* –produced by *El Universal*-- conducted by Guillermo Vela and Pedro Ferriz, who was the commercial announcer.⁴⁷ Other news broadcasts were the *Noticario Pemex*, the *Noticario Día a Día* –sponsored by the Mercedes Benz and produced by *Excelsior*. The formats were very similar to those used on the radio news broadcasts: they presented news taken from the newspapers.

To have a more precise idea of what sort of information was transmitted on these news broadcasts it is necessary to look briefly at how the information was presented in the newspapers in those years. In Mexico, there are two Constitutional articles under which press freedoms have been nominally protected. Article 6 of the Constitution says that: “the manifestation of the ideas will not be subject of judicial or administrative inquisition, but only in those cases in which it constitutes an attack on morals, third person’s rights, or when it provokes a misdemeanour or disturbs the public peace”. Also the first paragraph of Article 7 says that: “freedom of writing and publishing printed material on whichever subject is inviolable. No authority or law shall have the right to establish previous censorship, require bond from authors or printers, or restraint the liberty of the press, which shall be limited only by respect due to private life, morals and public peace. Under no circumstances shall a printing press be sequestrated as the *corpus delicti*”.

However, during the period that runs from the 1930s to the 1970s the printed press had almost completely developed under the tutelage of the regime; a relation of dependency that has been highly convenient for the newspapers’ survival. As a scholar says,

In the same ways that it “invented” the national bourgeoisie, the Mexican State has been the creator of the contemporary press. Without its constant help, without all the money it has spent on publicity in the press, the latter could not last beyond its scarce printing paper reserves... More than one newspaper has been created with public funds and more than one has been saved when the federal government substituted with its own publicity, the retirement of private publicity.⁴⁸

redonda (Round table), was inaugurated and within its format there were regular comments on politics and other public affairs.

⁴⁷ Juan José Miró V., *La televisión y el poder político en México*, Mexico City, Diana, 1997, p.62.

⁴⁸ Rafael Segovia, “Prensa, verdad y progresismo”, in *Razones*, n.35, 1981, p.11.

This does not mean that in Mexico press freedom was absolutely restricted, or that open forms of censorship were the dominant tune in the press. This would be an erroneous appreciation of the complex relations between the press and the regime. Criticism was always possible to a certain extent, as well as the open debate on certain other public matters, as is shown in an exhaustive study on six national newspapers from 1951 to 1980.⁴⁹ In general terms, law granted press freedom, but the complexity of the relations between the regime and the press generated a context in which, in the words of a specialist,

More than a governmental control on the press, the true thing is that there is self-control, a kind of "environmental censorship" [*censura ambiental*]. The newspapers know how far they can go, or know at least how far they want to go. The eventual mechanisms of control are not used because they become unnecessary.⁵⁰

Since the 1930s this "environmental censorship" was maintained through a wide variety of direct and indirect mechanisms from which the press (i.e., its owners, editors, journalists and reporters) received benefits—from exclusive information to subsidies and other forms of direct payments and bribes—in exchange for not trespassing certain "lines" or for supporting certain politicians. Criticism was thus possible against specific policies, programmes or politicians, but never against the regime's legitimacy, the president or the army. The "environmental censorship" (and the complicity it created) inhibited the press from autonomous, open and critical political attitudes, so self-censorship, and not strict supervision, was the norm. The result was that the press in Mexico became what has been labelled as a "guided press".⁵¹

Though there was no explicit law on it, the newspapers were "obliged" to print the information as received from the official dependencies on the first pages without any alteration, leaving only the editorials with the possibility of making some remarks and

⁴⁹ See L. Montgomery, "Criticism of the government officials in the Mexican press, 1951-1980", in *Journalism Quarterly*, n.62, 1985.

⁵⁰ Miguel Ángel Granados Chapa, *Examen de la comunicación en México*, Mexico City, El Caballito, 1981, p.9.

comments on that information. In this way the government reserved for itself the capacity to decide how much information was to be released to the media, and how it was to be printed. Logically, if a newspaper became consistently critical of the regime, there always existed the possibility to further deny any information to its journalists or to cut down the expenditures on advertising. And since there was no right to information,⁵² nor any other way of obtaining official information other than the good relations between the media and the government, the newspapers had good reason to be careful and respectful with the material they received.

Most of the information the papers presented on the government was composed both of top ranking official's discourses (including, of course, the president's speeches), and of official dependencies' bulletins. What is surprising is to find that these "notes" were signed by reporters and journalists as if they have written the article or collected the information themselves. This practice of publishing the bulletins without alteration or comment "contributed in essence to the remarkable uniformity of the Mexican press",⁵³ since most of the important papers were publishing basically the same notes in the same way on the first pages.

The reporters, who usually received very low salaries, were assigned to specific public dependencies in order to cover up the news "generated" within. Governmental officials in those public dependencies knew who these reporters were and with time they started to receive compensatory payments for their job. The same happened with the journalists who wrote regularly on specific subjects. Many of these reporters and journalists were included in regular payment lists under the heading of "extraordinary payments" or "payments for assistantship" turning this covered form of bribery into a bureaucratic and institutionalised procedure agreed on by all parts. Though it is difficult to calculate the amounts of money given to them –since it depended on the category of the journalist, on the newspaper's prestige and on the subject to be treated--, some authors calculate that

⁵¹ See Marvin Alisky, *Latin American Media: Guidance and Censorship*, Iowa, Iowa State University Press/Ames, 1981.

⁵² In Mexico a law that grants the right to information was just beginning to be discussed in the Summer of 2001, and only in April 2002 it was passed. I will come back on this subject in the conclusions.

⁵³ Bohmann, (1997), p.73.

often they represented more money than their regular wages.⁵⁴ Though the practice of bribing journalists and reporters is a common occurrence in Mexico, the “embute”, “chayote”, or “sobre”, as these kind of bribes are known, seem to have institutionalised since the times of President Alemán.⁵⁵

At some other times the journalists themselves set the prices they were going to charge for their reports. Of course, this worked better depending on the prestige of the journalists and of the newspaper. For instance, the journalist Vicente Leñero clearly notes how at the beginning of the 1970s, the prestigious columnist Carlos Denegri regularly bought some space in the *Excelsior* for the insertion of his column, but all the people cited there were previously charged a certain amount of money.⁵⁶ In many cases, journalists also used to write articles by assignment and were regularly paid for them.

Related to this were the infamous *gacetillas*, a sort of paid publicity but without differentiating it from the editorial comments or the normal news coverage. The *gacetilla* was inserted in the following way: a journalist was contacted by a government’s official who gave him an already written note (or dictated the exact terms in which it should be printed), and the journalist inserted the “note” as a regular news without distinguishing it from the rest. The newspapers all devoted different spaces in their pages, at different prices, for “inserting information”. For instance, by the end of the 1960s, the insertion of a *gacetilla* at the top of the front page of *Excelsior* had a cost of about one thousand US Dollars at that time.⁵⁷ Often, politicians and other public figures bought these spaces to present their own opinions as if they were facts. It was not infrequent that the journalists who got the “clients” for such spaces and their advertisements received a percentage of the price charged by the newspaper in reward for their mediation. These practices created

⁵⁴ See Francisco Javier Torres A., *El periodismo mexicano. Ardua lucha por su integridad*, Mexico City, Ediciones Coyoacán, 1997, pp.95-97 and Raymundo Riva-Palacio, “The kept Mexican press”, in *Nieman Reports*, n.2, Summer 1992, pp.53-55.

⁵⁵ Rodolfo Alcaraz, “Sesenta años de periodismo mexicano”, *Historia y sociedad*, n.6, Mexico City, 1966, p.124. Paradoxically, President Alemán himself (due to the influence of Colonel Garcia Valseca) decided to officially establish on the 7th of June the “Day of the Freedom of the Press”, celebrating the first one in 1952. As it was on the “Day of the *Voceador*”, on this day the President celebrated with journalists and editors sharing a lunch in prestigious restaurants and clubs and he would give a speech which was replicated by a representative of the organisers.

⁵⁶ Vicente Leñero, *Los periodistas*, 3rd printing, Mexico City, Joaquín Mortiz, 1999 (1978), p.73.

incentives for some journalists to devote a considerable part of their time to public relations in order to get these kind of clientele instead of devoting themselves to more professional tasks.

These bizarre relations between the journalists and the regime were maintained not only because of the low wages, but because in most cases there seemed to be no other way for poorly prepared journalists to do their job and collect information in a context of secrecy on internal government information. Obviously, the kind of notes published on the newspapers were most of the time presenting a highly favourable image of the regime at large, and of the specific politicians who paid for it. But if this sort of arrangement between journalists and public officials was not enough to secure the presentation of a positive image on public matters, there existed also other sorts of mechanisms that directly influenced on the newspaper organisations: publicity.

The most important source of income for the press has been publicity and advertising. These, however, quickly became a substantial mechanism for maintaining the "environmental censorship" in the printed media. The State, through all its dependencies—including the official party—spent huge sums of money on advertising. Though it is difficult to calculate the exact amount the State spent on advertising in those years, or what percentage that kind of publicity represented for the press—since these amounts are kept in secrecy—there are some estimates that calculate that the government ads in the press oscillated between 30 and 50 percent of their total ads inserted.⁵⁸ In any case, as is shown in Table 1.2, it is possible to calculate the importance of these amount of governmental advertising on the press, if one takes into account the prices that the newspapers charged for non-commercial publicity insertions on their pages. The prices for non-commercial insertions in the press were always between 30 and 50 percent higher than those for commercial insertions.

⁵⁷ Richard Cole, "The Mexican Press System: aspects of growth, control and ownership", in *Gazette*, n.21, 1975, p.70.

Table 1.2

Prices of advertising and publicity in eleven selected newspapers in Mexico City (the prices are in Mexican pesos of 1982)

Newspapers	Commercial publicity (complete page)		Non-commercial or political publicity (complete page)
	Even number page	Odd number page	
<i>El Día, Excélsior, El Heraldo, Novedades, El Sol de México, El Universal</i>	99,750	107,660	157,500
Diario de México	90,400	103,250	161,800
El Nacional*	101,500	101,500	101,500
<i>Ovaciones</i> (Sports paper)	106,500	110,000	168,800
La Prensa	50,000	52,000	87,500
Uno más Uno**	92,625	99,970	149,500

*Since *El Nacional* was a newspaper edited by the Secretariat of *Gobernacion*, it was also the only one that did not have differentiated prices for commercial and non-commercial ads.

**Some former members of *Excélsior* founded this newspaper in 1977.

Source: Bohmann, (1997), p.157.

For Bohmann, two consequences may be directly derived from this situation.⁵⁹ On the one hand, a large number of social and political organisations, including opposition political parties, were practically excluded from acquiring publicity and advertising in the newspapers because of the high prices.⁶⁰ The State was therefore the most important client of this non-commercial publicity. On the other hand, if it was true that the State contributed with 30-50 percent of ads inserted, it is possible to say that the whole

⁵⁸ John Spicer Nichols, *Coyotes of the Press: Professionalization of Mexican Journalist*, Ph.D. Thesis, Minn., University of Minnesota, 1979, p.15.

⁵⁹ Bohmann, (1997), p.158.

⁶⁰ It has to be said that the prices were set by the newspapers and not by the government. Therefore, for the press it was a form of rising the prices of their subsidies.

structure of publicity in the newspapers was highly dependent on the non-commercial publicity. The outcome of this collusion between the printed press and the regime was, of course, the presentation of favourable information that never questioned the regime's legitimacy or the president in turn. Bulletins, speeches and formal discourses composed most of the "information" provided by a printed press that was more dependant on governmental subsidies and protections to survive than on their readership and sales, which in Mexico have always been quite low.⁶¹

The information presented on the news broadcasts on radio and TV, based on the readership of news taken from the newspapers could not be other than supportive of a positive image of the regime. If bulletins, speeches and other kind of discourses composed the main "news" on the dailies, the news broadcasts, being a spoken extension of them, transmitted also this kind of "information". Editorialising was practically non-existent, and in-depth discussions on politics were not contemplated on their schedules. That was the way in which these media were contributing to political demobilisation and disinformation. However, by the late 1960s along with this support for the regime, was added another function to the news broadcasts that this time responded to the economic interests of the entrepreneurs.

After two decades of successful operations private television had become a key industry in Mexico.⁶² In the 1960s important technological changes were adopted for transforming TV production. Though the first video-tape machine was acquired in 1958

⁶¹ Though it is difficult to calculate the actual number of readers, since the newspapers very seldom declare their true circulation, in any case one must realise that it must be very low in relation to the total population. In 1994 a survey showed that 80 percent of the individuals have as their main source of information the TV and only for 15 percent of them it was the newspapers (Enrique Sánchez Ruiz, "El público de la prensa: la insoportable levedad del casi no ser", in J. Carlos Lozano (ed.), *Anuario de Investigación CONEIIIC*, n.1, Mexico City, 1994). This has been a constant feature, since also by the end of the 1970s, the Ministry of Budget and Planning estimated that the newspapers reached around 13 percent of the population, that was 9.1 million inhabitants out of a population of 70 million in 1980. However, according to a study of Karin Bohmann, even this number is optimistic, since by that year 79 percent of the population older than 15 years (57%, which summed 39.9 million inhabitants) were illiterate, i.e. 31.5 million people. Since the population under 15 years of age (43%, which amounted to 30.1 million inhabitants in 1980) were not considered as regular readers, that figure leaves a reader population of 8.4 million people (Karin Bohmann, *Medios de comunicación y sistemas informativos en México*, Mexico City, Alianza Editorial, reprinted 1997 (1986), pgs.122-132).

⁶² In 1973 television absorbed 44 percent of the total expenditures on publicity and by 1974 it was calculated to reach 3.3 million homes, which represented a population of more than 12 million people. In Martínez Medellín, (1992), p.58.

by TM, the profits of its adaptation started to be seen in the following decade. The incorporation of video-tape favoured the export of domestic soap operas and other programmes. *Teleprogramas Acapulco, S.A.* was created for that purpose in 1962. Video-tape transformed also the formats of the news broadcasts, since it became possible to present the news with direct images from the places where news occurred and to be less dependant on the pictures provided by the newspapers. Further advances came with the adoption of colour broadcasting in 1967. The inauguration of the National Telecommunications Network (RNT) in 1968 (of which the microwave network system was part) facilitated live transmissions of programmes and news broadcasts to different parts of the country simultaneously. These technological advances made it easier for TM to adopt new formats for news broadcasting along the lines of the most modern trends existing in the U.S., like the NBC news programme *Today*, which combined news with entertainment and interviews with public personalities. A good example of these new transmissions was the programme *Miscelánea Denegri* conducted by the journalist Carlos Denegri, who invited different personalities, even opposition politicians, to “debate” on his programme. The weight of his fame was not only due to the irreverent way in which he treated issues and even public officials, but also, as previously mentioned, to his practice of “selling his spaces” --both on television and on the printed press-- to public figures in order to elevate or destroy them.⁶³ Also in 1967, the news broadcast *Café Matutino* --better known as *Diario Nescafé*--was inaugurated following the same pattern of combining entertainment with news, conducted by the journalist Jacobo Zabłudowski. The duration of this news broadcast was of 40 minutes and it was transmitted at 7:30 a.m.

These changes coincided with the political atmosphere created by the 1968 crisis. In October 2nd 1968 a large number of students who were demonstrating on the Three Cultures Square, near Mexico City’s downtown, were massacred by military and state police forces. Though this episode would prove a watershed in Mexican political life, TV news broadcasts did not transmit any information about it. Broadcasting media opted for referring to “some disturbances caused by Communist-sympathiser students”, avoiding any reference to the shootings that brought about the deaths of a large number--still

⁶³ This attitude is described by Manuel Becerra Acosta, *Dos poderes*, Mexico City, Grijalbo, 1985, p.45

unknown today—of youngsters and closed the few spaces that existed for critical voices.⁶⁴

In the case of TM, its top executives considered it necessary to keep a tighter control over the news programmes, their content and production. It was thought to be necessary for the company to express its own points of view on society's problems and, therefore, the production of news broadcasts by the newspaper must come to an end. The then Director General of News Broadcasts in TM, Aurelio Perez, expressed this change when he said that,

Until quite recently... we were subjected in great part to the newspapers, who supplied us with news and other general information... We were dependent on their criteria to judge the relevance of the news, and this was obviously inconvenient, since in some occasions their aims and interests did not coincide with ours...⁶⁵

These ideas were reinforced by Miguel Alemán Velasco, the key figure behind the restructuring of the news programmes in TM, who explained that,

1968 took us by surprise. Suddenly we realised that we did not have a voice, a version, a position towards those critical events which we could put forward and sustain before the nation. The problem for this enterprise was that it did not have news programmes to canalise its opinion.

The contracts with the newspapers for the production of the news broadcasts were not renewed thereafter. At the same time, a new policy of centralisation of information was defined by TM, whose example was later followed by other media. For such purposes the General Direction of News Broadcasts was created in 1969. The outcome of this policy was the ending of the transmission of the news broadcast *Su Diario Nescafé*, still produced by newspapers and sponsored by Nestle, on 28 August 1970, and the production of their own news broadcasts.

The duration of the news broadcasts were also lengthened to an hour or more. Until then the average duration of a news broadcast was around fifteen minutes. The anchorman of

and by Vicente Leñero, (1999).

⁶⁴ Gutiérrez Espindola, (1985), p.69.

Su Diario Nescafé, Jacobo Zabłudowsky, an experienced journalist who began his career in 1950 in the news broadcast of Channel 2 *Noticiero General Motors*, became also the anchorman of the new *24 Horas* in September 1970 (transmitted every evening and simultaneously broadcast on XEW radio). With time, this news broadcast was to become the most important voice of the corporation and the indispensable reference for knowing the official governmental viewpoints in relation to domestic politics.⁶⁶

Other TV companies, like *Televisión Independiente de México* (TIM), owner of Channel 8, also inaugurated two programmes, the late evening news broadcast *En punto*, transmitted daily from 22:00 to 23:00 p.m., which created a direct challenge with the TM programme *24 Horas* (especially because it had an agreement with the official news agency Notimex for the provision of news) and a morning transmission called *Hoy Mismo*, which had a duration of four hours and presented not only news, but also live shows and entertainment. Channel 13, owned by Francisco Aguirre of Grupo Radio Centro, also inaugurated a news programme called *Notitrece*, which could not really compete with the stronger TIM and TM networks and lagged behind them.⁶⁷

With the inauguration of this new format for news broadcasting, the concessionaires were also creating a voice for themselves and promoting their own interests. As Miguel Alemán clearly puts it: "our purpose was... to give [the news broadcast] all the information strength so that the people could orient their views in terms of Televisa's point of view".⁶⁸ This point of view was guided by its compromises with the regime (by the promotion of its positive image), but also by a new feature: the promotion of its own corporate interests. As Gonzalez Molina shows, the presentation of news in Televisa is

⁶⁵ *Antena*, no.34, May 1974, p.9.

⁶⁶ Pablo Arredondo Ramirez, "Opacidad en la ventana electrónica: el proceso electoral de 1988 en los noticiarios televisivos" (1991b), in Pablo Arredondo Ramirez, Gilberto Fregoso Peralta and Raúl Trejo Delarbre, *Así se calló el sistema. Comunicación y elecciones en 1988*, Mexico, University of Guadalajara, 1991, p.141.

⁶⁷ Channel 13 started to transmit regularly on October 12th 1968. However, by 1970 the channel was having major financial problems that led his main shareholder, Francisco Aguirre, to look for new business partners. The partner turned out to be the industrial businessman Alejo Peralta, who shortly afterwards transferred his shares to the government "in a quite unclear action". Zarur Osorio (1996), pgs.50-51.

⁶⁸ Cited in Gabriel Gonzalez Molina, "Mexican television news: the imperatives of corporate rationale", in *Media, Culture and Society*, vol.9, no.2, April, 1987, p.174.

expected to contribute to the promotion of its interests through four aspects:⁶⁹ 1) the structured promotion of corporate activity has become entrenched in the occupational knowledge of newsmen as a particularly valuable attribute of stories and events. Televisa's employees feel more committed to the organisation than to any other principle of objectivity or impartiality. 2) When gathering and selecting the "news", promotion of the corporation's interests is entrenched in the minds of newsmen as criteria of newsworthiness. 3) There is a consistent neglect of stories with a potential damaging effect to the image of the corporation. 4) Certain people and groups receive special deferential treatment because of the importance they have for Televisa. Here one can nominate, above everyone else, the president in turn.

The defence of their own interests and *Weltanschauungen* becomes more visible when presenting information and news on foreign politics, since one may note a sharp contrast with the regime's positions, (which the media totally supported on domestic affairs). The nationalistic and revolutionary discourse of the regime was always maintained in the official institutions and it became, in many ways, the core of the principles that were said to be defended and practised by the Mexican foreign policy. Though it was clear that Mexico was aligned with the Western powers, the Mexican foreign policy tried to distance themselves from open supportive positions and practised, whenever possible, a policy based upon legal principles which placed at its core the sovereignty of the nations and the self-determination of the peoples (also as a way of avoiding and discarding external criticism on domestic politics). These foreign policy attitudes and discourse became very important for internal legitimacy, since it characterised the Mexican government—in the international arena—as anti-imperialist, progressive and engaged in the fight for the rights of the weak nations against the ambitions of the great powers.⁷⁰

This formalistic revolutionary and progressive discourse was also present in the public radio programmes, which tried to praise the national history, the national heroes, the

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pgs 175-180.

⁷⁰ In this sense it should be recalled that Mexico was the only Latin American nation that opposed the expulsion of Cuba from the American Organisation of State, becoming an "example" of a progressive foreign policy—though in reality all exchanges with the island were dramatically reduced. This action, which was more formal than substantial, helped the regime to maintain a progressive image with Left wing groups and organisations inside the country.

"Latinamericanist" vocation and solidarity of Mexico with its "brother countries", and the critical attitudes towards the abuse of power and disrespect for the sovereignty of the nations by the great powers. It is noteworthy that the public radio station, *Radio Educación*, presented on its news broadcast more international news than domestic ones, and the main area it tried to cover was Latin America, displaying also a quite critical attitude against American interventionism in the area, like in the Central American conflicts.

In sharp contrast, private TV and radio broadcasts, especially those of Televisa, displayed an openly pro-American attitude and many of their notes presented information in ways that were divergent to the official discourse on foreign policy. In an analysis of the news contents at the beginning of 1984, Jose Luis Gutierrez Espindola shows how in the case of the presentation of international news, what dominates the positions and comments in Televisa's *24 Horas* was open anti-communism, the support of the positions of the Reagan government in Central America, and the presentation of material based on local American daily life.⁷¹ The presentation of information on international affairs showed then the divergence between the political interests of the regime with the economic and corporate interests of the concessionaires, but in any case, these differences did not generated any serious confrontation.

With regard to the information on domestic matters, the content of these new programmes did not change radically from what they used to be. They remained essentially characterised by an information presented out-of-context, by the trivialising of any relevant information, and by the complete coverage of the presidential activities of the day, and of the official speeches of top-ranking politicians with the clear intention of promoting a positive image of the regime. Along with that, a good deal of entertainment was also presented as "news". As one scholar points out during these years, the news of one evening edition of *24 Horas* were "the presentation of new Ambassadors before the president, the assistance of the president to the dinner that celebrated the "Day of the Newspapers' Street Sellers", the support speech of the Chief of the Federal District

⁷¹ Gutierrez Espindola (1985), pgs. 83-95. At that time, the foreign policy of De la Madrid was emphasising that the conflicts in Central America should not be seen within the East-West confrontation, but should be analysed from a regional socio-economic basis.

Department to his collaborators, the awarding of the national prize of sciences by the Secretary of Public Health...".⁷² It must also be noted that most of the "news" presented in the broadcast originated in Mexico City, since it is the political capital of the country and the place where more "speeches could be collected". The provinces were practically absent, except in those cases when the President visited them or in the case of the occurrence of some other "noticeable" event, such as natural disasters or other calamities.

More than serious or relevant news, the news broadcasts presented a sort of informative mosaic of a great number of discontinuous "incidents" without context, explanation or analysis, and specifically in the case of domestic political "news", focused on the activities, speeches and other ceremonies related to the Federal Executive—mostly those of the president in turn (since the Congress, the Supreme Court and other levels of government were practically absent from coverage). Televisa's *24 Horas* is the best example, since with all its entertainment-as-news, its fragmentation and trivialising of information, it soon became the most important news broadcast in the Mexican television. It was the only news broadcast that was regularly visited by top ranking governmental officials and the most prominent businessmen. Though *24 Horas* became the most visible example of the broadcasting media support to the regime, all other news broadcasts followed its example in one way or another. Chapters 4 and 5 will show precisely how TV and radio news broadcasts helped to support the regime's image and dis-information through their presentation of information on politics, focusing on the campaigns.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p.84.

Chapter Two

The Broadcast Media as an Interest Group

From its start in the 1920s, the broadcast media have operated in Mexico following the commercial model very similar to the one at work in the United States and quite different to the ones adopted in most Western European countries. Media became a dominantly private industrial activity and media investors are, thus, part of the wider entrepreneurial classes in Mexico. However, though the installations, facilities, equipment and other material and resources belong to private companies, the State holds the ultimate property control over the media since they operate through federal concessions.

A basic condition in the relationship between the regime and the broadcast media was the duality between property and operation. On the one hand, since they are part of the "general communication system", and these are national assets, the ultimate proprietor on behalf of the nation is the State; on the other, the private entrepreneurs are entitled to obtain benefits and profits out of their operation through the awarding of a public concession. This duality was crucial for the regime to maintain the political control over broadcasting, but it also became an incentive for the private media entrepreneurs (i.e. the concessionaires) to organise and defend their interests, since the rules by which concessions are allocated, suspended or cancelled have been highly ambiguous and, therefore, subject to circumstantial and discretionary political interpretations.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first discusses the conception of the media concessionaires as an interest group, their creation of a National Chamber of the Radio and Television Industry (CIRT), their close links with some important PRI political groups, and the pressure they exercised to obtain important gains in the legal and the economic spheres. It also shows that though such pressure was successful in the economic and legal spheres, the regime was never disposed to negotiate its ultimate control over the political sphere. The second serves as a warning to be careful with the usage of a term such as "interest group" for encompassing all the concessionaires, since there were always important differences between Mexico City media entrepreneurs and those of other provinces.

The CIRT and the Relations between the Concessionaires and the Political Elite

As was said in chapter one, though there was general support from the regime for the development of a domestic entrepreneurial class, including the private media businesses, this did not prevent media entrepreneurs from organising and, along with their close links with some political elite groups within the official party, promoting their interests before the State. The media concessionaires created organisations and mechanisms through which they could exercise pressure and established alliances with the political elite. This section discusses precisely these modes of interaction between the media and the regime. It departs from a conception of these media concessionaires as an interest group, followed by an account on their creation of the National Chamber of the Radio Industry, an analysis of their close links with some important PRI political groups, and the pressure they exercised to obtain important economic benefits.

The discussion about the nature, interactions and scope of interest groups have not reached clear agreements yet,¹ but for the purposes of this work I will depart from a very simple (and classic) definition of what interest groups are: they are formally organised associations which attempt to influence governmental decisions.² Though this definition seems restrictive, since a great deal of meaningful connotations of "interest group" might not be comprehended here, it has the undeniable advantage of identifying such groups by two "visible" characteristics: they exist in time and space as *formally organised associations*, and their main activity is to defend and promote their interests (which may or may not be similar to their members') by *trying to influence public decisions* in specific areas. The second part of this chapter deals with another quite important dimension of the interest groups that for the moment has been left aside: their internal patterns.

In Mexico, media entrepreneurs have made use of formally organised associations to influence the governmental policies on communications, media, and broadcast almost from the start. It must be noticed that they were one of the first industrial groups to *autonomously*

¹ See for instance: David B. Truman, *The Governmental Process: Political Interest and Public Opinion*, New York, Knopf, 1951; Abraham Holzman, *Interest Group and Lobbying*, New York, MacMillan, 1966; Harmon Ziegler and G. Wayne Peak, *Interest Groups in American Society*, 2nd Edition, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1972; and Graham K. Wilson, *Interest Groups*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1990.

organise to defend their interests before the State.³ The first antecedent of a modern organised association in this industry was the National Radio League, created in 1922, which brought together many of the incipient amateur radio broadcasters. The following year this organisation merged with the Centre for Engineers and the Mexican Central Radio Club to form the Mexican Central Radio League.⁴ It was this League which elaborated the first federal radio law project –commissioned by President Obregón—and from the start they tried to model the development of that industry through commercial patterns. Some years later, in February 23rd 1937, the Mexican Association of Radio Stations was established. This was transformed, in June, into the Mexican Association of Commercial Radiobroadcasters (AMERC), which incorporated twenty stations in the country (10 of which were located in Mexico City). Its aim was to defend the “common interests” of the radio broadcasters and “to create a common front in all cases in which their activities might result affected”.⁵ Their “common interests” were, of course, defined by the maintenance of a commercial radio model similar, in some ways, to the one existing in the U.S.

In 1936, President Cárdenas promoted a Law of Chambers that established that all the firms of a certain size and importance related to commerce or industry must be affiliated into national chambers for their representation and consulting. For each important industrial or commercial activity was created a specific chamber. Following this requirement of the Law of Chambers, in 1939 the AMERC joined the Chamber of Transports and Communications constituting its radio division. What is important to note here is that, in the same fashion as some other important entrepreneurial organisations, like the COPARMEX, the AMERC was only recognised, but not created by the State and, in its field of activity, it enjoyed certain degree of autonomy and negotiation capacity. Below I will discuss how the AMERC successfully influenced the outcome of the third General Communication Lines Law of 1939 on their behalf.

In 1941, during the administration of President Ávila Camacho a new Law of Commercial and Industrial Chambers was issued authorising the creation of specialised chambers in the

² Robert H. Salisbury, “Interest Groups”, in Fred. I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol.4, *Nongovernmental Politics*, Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Menlo Park, CA, 1975, p.171.

³ The first radio organisation was created in 1922, fourteen years before Congress passed a Federal Law of Chambers, obliging all businessmen to join in (or create) industrial, services or commerce chambers.

⁴ Fernández Christlieb, (1996), p.89.

industrial and commercial activities. This enabled the AMERC to transform into the National Chamber of the Radiobroadcast Industry (CIR) in December 1941. In 1970 the CIR changed its name into National Chamber of the Radio and Television Industries (CIRT) twenty years after television was operating in Mexico.

One must note the rapid and autonomous organisation of the concessionaires as a self-conscious group with a clear goal: to establish, maintain and defend the private commercial model as the dominant one in the Mexican broadcasting media. In a political regime that restricted the freedom of addressing political issues on radio, the entrepreneurs focused their efforts entirely on the predominance of a commercial model that could secure economic gains. The Chamber served as a direct channel of communication with the government for the solving of disputes, reaching agreements on anything related to that industry, and finally for pressing for the maintenance of a favourable *status quo* for the concessionaires. The second chapter of the statutes of the CIRT, entitled "The Object of the Chamber", states that its purposes are (due to their relevance here are cited only six out of nine objectives):

- I.- To represent the general interests of the industries of radio and television and of those firms that constitute them.
- II.- To study all the matters that affect the radio and television activities as well as to provide for the measures that tend to the development of their industry.
- III.- To participate in the defence of the particular interests of their members with the only limitations that are established in the Law of Commercial and Industrial Chambers.
- IV.- To constitute a consulting organisation to the State in matters related to radio and television.
- V.- To exercise the right of petition before the corresponding authorities, be they Federal, state or municipal, in order to ask for the expedition or modification of laws and other administrative dispositions that might affect the activities of radio and television.
- VI.- To become a referee in case of conflicts among its members.

This part of the statutes establishes the CIRT as an interest group and lays down the guidelines that must be met for defending its interests before the State. Here emerges a

⁵ Mejia Barquera, (1999a), p.8.

relevant question: in what way was the Chamber able to influence governmental actions and policies to the advantage of its members?

This involves a question of power; or more precisely, of elucidating what sort of power the CIRT have. Steven Lukes contends in one of his major works that the most powerful groups in a society are able to protect their interests by exercising control precisely on the ways in which the rest of society regards these interests.⁶ A completely critical attitude towards the interests of the most powerful groups is never fully developed in any society. In a capitalist society, some of the most powerful groups are of course the big corporations, against whose basic *Weltanschauung* no one may raise a challenge, or even worse, few would be able to imagine a coherent challenge to it. Following this argument, if there is no attempt to overthrow the actual capitalist order in developed societies, it is not because the workers, for example, have consciously calculated the costs and risks of doing so, but because they are completely immersed (and subdued) within the dominant groups capitalist values and power.

In the case of the mass media entrepreneurs, the effects would be even more catastrophic, one can imagine, since they are precisely the ones who "elaborate, select, and broadcast" the messages to the rest of the society. For the issues in this work, Lukes' approach is problematic in two ways. On the one hand, the mere existence of a structured organisation to defend the concessionaires' interests shows that, though the regime has a "general policy of support for capitalism", there have also been in fact some important disagreements between the interests of the concessionaires (who are undeniably part of the capitalists dominant groups) and those of the regime. On the other hand, though the concessionaires have been pressing to defend their interests at the economic level, the regime was successful in preventing them from entering in to discussing political matters autonomously, which shows their "limited" capacity in ultimately leading the political system. Therefore, one might agree with Lukes in general terms about the regime's attempts to favour and support the reproduction of a capitalist system, but to remain only at this level would obscure the differences that actually existed between the regime and particular capitalist interest groups.

⁶ Steven Lukes, *Power, A Radical View*, London, MacMillan, 1974.

Bringing the argument back to the interest groups level, Charles Lindblom in his *Politics and Markets* argues that business groups occupy a "privileged position" in relation to other interest groups within a market economy.⁷ Business groups are very influential in these economies due to the role of the businessmen as the main participants in making the decisions that determine the prosperity of regions and countries. In this regard, the government is compelled to provide the businessmen with the much needed confidence and facilities for their investment, which translates into higher economic growth, prosperity and employment. In Lindblom's words businessmen are not "the representatives of a special interest...[but] they appear as functionaries performing functions that government officials regard as indispensable".⁸ In this sense, the government is not pressed by the businessmen in the same fashion as by other interest groups, since being conscious of the importance of their role for economic and social welfare, the design of the general policies would tend to be favourable to them –which means being favourable, in Lindblom's terms, to the prosperity of society at large. One problem with this view is that Lindblom assumes that all businessmen interest groups are (and also the government) always completely conscious of these "superior" interests on behalf of society's prosperity. Therefore, all disagreement between government and businessmen's groups could be taken to originate in governmental incompetence, inefficiency, bureaucratism, or any other short-sightedness on the part of the public officials, which in reality is not necessarily the case. Other problem with Lindblom's thesis is that it is impossible to know whether business interests are capable by themselves of influencing governmental policies, or if any such influence is due to their structural importance in the economy. Still, another difficulty would be to determine the power of different businessmen's groups in relation to each other, and moreover, it would become extremely complex to explain such differences among them in their results without resorting to external factors (like governmental preferences or incompetence).

A general disadvantage with the ideas of such diverse scholars as Lukes and Lindblom is that they cannot provide an explanation as to why there are certain capitalist or businessmen interest groups which are more effective than others. Furthermore, even in the cases of always-effective groups (i.e. those who get their interests reflected into public

⁷ Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets. The World's Political-Economic Systems*, Basic Books, New York, 1977.

⁸ *Ibid.*

policies) these theories cannot predict just how influential these groups are, since the theories become immediately trapped in the dilemma of a parallelism of purpose and action between these groups and the government. This poses a practical problem: how to measure the power of an interest group, or put it in a different way, how to measure its effectiveness in influencing public policy outcomes?

In his very famous work, *Who Governs?*,⁹ Robert Dahl argues, in a study based in New Haven, that in relatively open systems any group with a major problem, issue or goal would make it publicly known. The argument of Dahl then goes on to say that it is possible to note whether a group is powerful or not if said group by means of cover or overt influence is frequently successful in initiating policies over the opposition of others, or when no opposition appears, or is frequently successful in vetoing policies initiated by others. Since there is a major difference between the political arenas in Mexico and New Haven precisely because the former was then characterised by its limited pluralistic regime, one cannot expect to agree with Dahl's main conclusion in the case of Mexico (that the power in a community is widely diffused). However, it is still possible to use Dahl's method of study for observing if the CIRT has or has not been a powerful group, as will be discussed in brief.

In the United States, the negotiation tactics most widely used by interest groups to defend, protect and impose their interests are carried out through lobbying. The lobbying is not always carried out by professional agencies, but it in many cases is carried out directly by elite interaction, which most of the time is highly informal. As one author notes,

...American interest group elites may still be expected to contact government officials primarily when they have something specific to discuss, some policy question to talk over, or some decision to influence. The contact is irregular and ad hoc, and it is quite often shielded from public scrutiny. Indeed in American politics the informality is likely to be accentuated by having both the official and the nongovernmental elite insist that their visit was only a social encounter between old friends.¹⁰

This informality poses two kind of problems for the researcher. On the one hand, it might lead to overemphasise the influence of a certain group in cases where, there might only be parallelism between interests and action. On the other, it poses an analytical problem since

⁹ Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1961.

it becomes difficult to determine which elite meetings can be considered part of a negotiation, and which specific roles are the participants playing. In Mexico most of the negotiations between private and governmental elite take place in a context of secrecy and informality. Moreover, in the case of the broadcast media, many important concessionaires entered the ranks of the PRI. There was a coincidence between the media elite with some groups of the political elite, the most notorious case being the participation of President Miguel Alemán (1946-1952) and his family in the most important private television venture in Mexico--Televisa. Let me discuss these interactions between politicians and concessionaires.

Until the early 1970s, there were nine major radio concessionaires, top CIRT officials, and even media union leaders who also held public charges as PRI Federal Deputies, Governors, and Senators: Luis M. Farías, Rubén Marín, Gonzalo Castellot Madrazo, Luis I. Santibáñez, Enrique Bermúdez, León Michel, Guillermo Morales Blumenkron, Guillermo Núñez Keith and Rafael Riva Palacio. Moreover, there were other close collaborators of the president of TM, Emilio Azcárraga, who occupied important posts in the public administration, like Oscar Bravo Santos, who became Director General of Information in the Secretary of *Gobernación* in 1958 (he also became federal deputy, Governor of Nuevo León and Major of Monterrey as well) or Walter C. Buchanan, who became Secretary of Communications and Public Works in 1959.

Taking this into account the present work tries to solve the problem of how to establish with relative accuracy, the power of the media businessmen by using as a basis Dahl's method of observing the extent to which this group was successful in negotiating its views on the policy outcomes, even against the opposition of the government (or, at least, of some other political elite members). Dahl's method is the most useful since, at many times, the advancement of the Chamber's interests was actually done by directly opposing other regime's projects.

In this manner, one need not search for other interest groups who oppose the CIRT, but to focus on the policy projects proposed by the regime itself, then on the reactions of the Chamber to them, and finally on the policy outcomes approved and implemented. In this way, the basic political framework in which Dahl's theory inserted his case study -political

¹⁰ Salisbury (1975), p.210.

pluralism—, does not condition to it the usage of his method, since it can then be used as well in other political contexts. Here three specific cases where there was an open disagreement between the concessionaires and the government are examined: the issuing of the Federal Law of Radio and Television (LFRT) of 1960, the issuing of an Executive decree establishing new taxes for the concessionaires in 1968-69, and the issuing of the Regulation of the LFRT of 1973. In all three cases it was first the regime who presented the proposals for legal reforms and the entrepreneurs who responded, and finally modified the projects on their behalf.

Previous to 1960, there have been some other cases where the concessionaires pressurised the government to modify the original policy projects on their behalf. Maybe the best articulated attempt to influence the governmental policies before 1960 took place in 1937-9. In September 1937 the Secretary of Transports and Communications, General Francisco Mújica, presented a law project meant to replace the Law of General Communication Lines of 1932 with a new one (actually, the third one). General Mújica was famous for his ideas on the need to substitute entirely the “mixed radio model” with a single public radio system dependant on the State. According to the Secretariat of Communications and Transports this project main goal was the creation of a strong public service on the radio that could “educate the masses, avoid the commercial criteria in the definition of the programming, improve the taste of the audiences, and prevent the bourgeoisie from imposing its ideology on the people”. The AMERC —recently created in 1937—reacted against this project in defence of maintaining the commercial radio model. The AMERC directed its pressure onto the deputies in charge of the revision and passing of the law and they also wrote letters and sought interviews directly with President Cárdenas. The controversy that this project aroused meant that it remained for two years in the correspondent Deputy Commission for evaluation.¹¹ Important modifications demanded by the AMERC were added in the final version that was sent to President Cárdenas in 1939. The dominance of the commercial model was recognised; the restrictions on commercial advertising were removed; and it omitted the tax on radio users. Though the final version of the law maintained the definition of the radio as a “public service” against the will of the concessionaires (who wanted it to be defined as a “public interest activity”). The creation of a consultative commission for

¹¹ A detailed account on this case can be consulted in Fernando Mejía Barquera, (1989), pgs.73-95.

radio was also accepted. This was composed of three representatives from the Secretariat of Communications and Transports and two from the National Chamber of Transports and Communications (from which the AMERC was part). Through this body all future amendments to the law must be informally approved by the concessionaires. But perhaps the most important advantage they got was the possibility for them to import without tax all the technology and equipment they required for the stations.¹²

However, in this case it is difficult to see how truly effective this pressure was, since on the one hand, Mújica was seriously considered to be a clear forerunner for the presidential candidacy as part of the Left-wing *Cardenista* group and he was facing strong competition from other more conservative political groups who were opposed to such projects. The debates on the Law took place precisely during the nationalisation of the oil industry (1938) and the start of the informal competition among political groups within the party before the elections of 1940. General Mújica required the support of President Cárdenas to pass this law against the interests not only of the entrepreneurs, but also against his own political rivals in the party. However, it was in these same years when President Cárdenas was using all his strength to deal with the recent nationalisation of the oil industry, that he was also facing criticism from conservative and entrepreneurial sectors. It is then possible to imagine that it might not have been only the effective pressure of the AMERC that finally changed the original law project, but a combination of this with the shifting political coalitions inside the official party (that were preparing for the replacement of the *Cardenistas* in power) and with the specific political moment characterised by the move towards the nationalisation of the oil industry for which President Cárdenas needed much support and, therefore, he might not be willing to open in such moments another front of dispute. All these created a context that favoured less radical measures, though nevertheless is very clear that the concessionaires did in fact press on their behalf. After this Law of 1939, all further legislation until 1960 was basically intended to regulate technical aspects in order to facilitate the development of the radio and it did not endanger the commercial dominant model on this medium.¹³

¹² *Ibid.*, p.91.

¹³ Fernández Chrislieb, (1996), pgs.109-118.

In 1959 the government recognised that the Law of General Communication Lines of 1939 was outmoded since its regulations did not contemplate the operation of television, which by that time had been developing for ten years. New changes were required. The Commission for Communications and Transports of the Chamber of Deputies elaborated a first draft of a new Federal Law of Radio and Television (LFRT) which was to replace the Law of 1939. This draft was approved by the Chamber of Deputies and passed then to the Senate for its final approval. It was at this point that the concessionaires decided to exercise a strong pressure on the Upper Chamber in order to modify the original version of the law passed by the Deputies.

The unconformity of the concessionaires was focused on four points. Firstly, in the original version of the law, Article 4 defined radio and television as “public services” extending the concept already established for the radio in the previous legislation to television. For the concessionaires, radio and television should have been considered as “activities of public interest”, a concept that enabled them, amongst other things, to maintain the legal faculty to fix autonomously—without the intervention of any authority—the prices of the publicity fares and to decide to whom they sell air time. The position of the Chamber was expressed by its president, Luis Fernández de Soto (who was an advocate that worked for Azcárraga, the chairman of TM), when he emphatically said that “radio broadcasting is a public interest activity, it is a *service to the public*, but not a *public service*”.¹⁴

Secondly, in its original version, Article 59 established that the State could use the commercial radio and television channels to freely transmit one hour a day without interruption for educational, cultural or social orientation programmes. This point was opposed by the concessionaires with the argument that such a disproportionate amount of time would inevitably harm their economic interests—affecting their time for advertising—, especially since there was no agreement on the time tables to transmit such State time.

Thirdly, Article 90 of the Law argued for the creation of a National Council of Radio and Television chaired by the Secretary of *Gobernación* and composed by one representative from the Secretariat of Communications, one from the Secretariat of Education, one from the Secretariat of Health, two from the concessionaires and two from the media unions. According to Article 91, the functions of this Council were to determine the most

¹⁴ Cited in *ibid.*, pgs.159-160.

appropriate time schedules for broadcasting public programmes, to serve as a consulting organ to the Federal Executive, to contribute to improve the moralistic, cultural, and artistic level of the broadcastings, and to participate in all affairs related to radio and television. For the concessionaires, the functioning of such a council would mean the permanent scrutiny of their programming and the contents of their transmissions. And, if it was true that, in political matters they were unwilling to alter the terms of their tacit agreements of support to the regime and remain "silent", so to speak, it was also true that they were not willing to replace this condition of self-censorship for any external mechanism for censorship. Fourthly, the final point of disagreement between the concessionaires and the original Law project refers to the daily time allowed for commercial ads. According to article 67 of the project voted by the Deputies, there should be a maximum of 20 minutes of commercial advertising per hour. This limitation was also refused by the concessionaires. Their main arguments were that there was no need for endangering the proper functioning of a prosperous industry, especially since it was so important for "the nation".

Thus, after months of negotiations and constant meetings between the concessionaires with top ranking politicians, including the president, a final version of this law, approved and passed in the Senate and published by the Executive on the *Official Daily* in January 19th 1960, incorporated the main demands of the concessionaires. In this way,

- Article 4 defines radio and television as public interest activities, which protected the radio and television industries from a more consistent interference on the part of the State.¹⁵ A direct consequence of this definition was that, as Article 53 says, the Secretariat of Communications and Transports "will fix the *minimum* fare rates" to be charged by commercial stations for advertising. The maximum fare rates were left, of course, to the market.
- Article 59 admits only 30 minutes a day for public programmes, which could be covered in one single broadcast or at different times during the day, and in this way this time (known as State time), would not affect the commercial activities of the stations.¹⁶

¹⁵ Article 4 of the 1960 Law states that: "Radio and television constitute a public interest activity and, therefore, the State must protect it in order for it to cope with its social function" (*Ley Federal de Radio y Televisión*, Published in the *Official Daily of the Federation*, on January, Tuesday 19th, 1960).

¹⁶ Article 59 says: "The radio and television stations must freely broadcast every day for up to thirty minutes, continuously or not, dedicated to the promotion of educational, cultural and social orientation programmes."

In spite of the concerns of the concessionaires for ceding this time for public transmissions, it soon became clear that the government lacked the resources to produce the programmes required to cover such "State time".

- Article 67 replaced any restriction to advertising time with the following phrase: [in all broadcasts there] "must be kept a prudent balance between the commercial propaganda and the rest of the programming". As can be seen, the words "prudent balance" are so vague that in reality it was left to the consideration and convenience of the broadcasters how prudent such equilibrium should be in each programme.
- And as for the National Council on Radio and Television (Articles 90 and 91), it has actually never met and, therefore, the public programmes—for which it was supposed to establish the time-tables—have been shown at the lowest rating hours of the day (very late at night or very early in the morning), and it has never been defined how to improve "the moral, cultural, and artistic level" of the broadcastings—which was, of course, a practically impossible task beyond the mere rhetorical level.

Though it is not possible to know the exact terms of the negotiations carried out between the Chamber and the governmental officials and parliamentary members, what is clear is that the final version of the LFRT was quite favourable to the concessionaires' interests. However, this time it is possible to infer the pressure of the concessionaires on the one hand because this time there existed a previous draft of the law passed and approved by the whole Chamber of Deputies (and one must take into account that at that time there was no political fraction bringing into question the actions of President Lopez Mateos, who was in his second year of government). On the other hand, there exists the testimony, some years afterwards, of Deputy Antonio Castro Leal, who was part of the commission that supported the original version of the LFRT, referring to the fact that "the deputies who passed the original law felt somehow betrayed by the Senate", since it was in that Chamber where the original law project was modified "due perhaps to the influence of [the broadcast] companies" ¹⁷

The Federal Executive will indicate the dependencies that must provide the material to be presented and the broadcasts will be co-ordinated by the National Council of Radio and Television" (*Ibid.*).

¹⁷ See Antonio Castro Leal, "Radio y televisión", in *Los medios de comunicación de masas en México*, Series of Studies, n.10, Mexico City, FCPS-UNAM, 1969.

The Law of 1960 was highly favourable to the concessionaires' economic interests, as was recognised that same year by the President of the Radio Chamber, Guillermo Morales Blumenkron, in a public speech that emphasised that the President had given them the chance to "vigorously materialise [their] purposes in a law and its respective regulation".¹⁸ Nevertheless, in strict political terms, the regime maintained the ultimate control over the transmissions –and this was not negotiable. For instance, Article 19 gives the Secretariat of Communications and Transports the faculty to award a concession on radio or television guided by "its free judgement". Article 31, section IX, gives the Secretariat of Communications and Transports the faculty to revoke any concession due to "any failure in coping with the requirements of the concession given, *not specified in the previous [eight] paragraphs*" (Italics are mine). Article 96 gives the Secretariat of *Gobernación* the faculty to visit the stations whenever it considers it pertinent, and Article 97 makes it mandatory that the concessionaires attend the observations made by this dependency. Article 101, section IV, sanctions "any substantial alteration of the texts, bulletins and material provided by the government for transmission". In this way, the regime could accept the economic demands of the concessionaires as long as it could keep the ultimate political controls over broadcasting.

The LRFT did not contain any legal disposition that really went against the economic interests of the concessionaires, and it gave them all the facilities needed for developing their industry. The gratitude of the concessionaires to the government is more than eloquent in a speech given by Rafael Riva Palacio, a radio concessionaire, before President López during the "Broadcasting Week" in October 1964 Mateos. Riva Palacio said,

Mr. President: when you took office there were some people who showed doubt and fear. Your patriotic purpose was not always understood. We, who have the honour of being your friends, had faith in you. Time has given us the reason, and by the end of your term you enjoy more sympathies, more respect and more strength than any other Mexican in our time. Now that you are preparing to leave the highest office of the country, with the spiritual modesty that characterises only those who are great in history [sic], you will receive the affection, the admiration and the gratitude of the Mexican people, who express the patriotic good that you deserve [sic].¹⁹

¹⁸ Speech of Guillermo Morales Blumenkron (who was an important member of the PRI, and who had been Federal Deputy, Senator and Governor of the State of Puebla), cited in Raúl Cremoux, *¿Televisión o prisión electrónica?*, Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1974, p.21.

¹⁹ Cremoux, (1974), p.30.

In economic terms, the LFRT was not the last example of a successful negotiation of the concessionaires with the government. The following year, in December 29th 1961, as part of the annual Income Law of the Federation, it was established that radio and TV stations must pay a tax equivalent to five percent of their gross incomes.²⁰ There was a immediate response from the Chamber and, as a consequence of long negotiations that involved the Secretariat of Public Finance, the Secretariat of Communications and Transports, some members of the Senate, and the President himself, it was finally agreed that the concessionaires were to pay tax equivalent only to 1.25 percent of their gross incomes.²¹

Another case in which the concessionaires favourably negotiated their interests against a government initiative occurred in 1969. As in 1961 they successfully modified the criteria of the Federal Income Law in relation to their fiscal contributions. In December 30th and 31st 1968 there appeared in the *Official Daily* the Income Law of the Federation for 1969 and the Budget Project of the Federation for 1969 respectively. In the former, Article 9 established that all private enterprises functioning under federal concessions for exploiting any activity of public interest—as was the case of broadcasting—shall pay the government a tax equivalent to 25 percent of all the payments they received for the services they provided. This meant that, in the case of broadcasting, the stations must pay 25 percent of all their broadcasting services, i.e. publicity and ads incomes. This tax ultimately affected those firms and individuals who bought air-time for advertising. But the stations were not willing to add to their tariffs—which in some cases were already very high, like those of TM—an extra charge for their clientele.

However, the Budget Project, issued one day before, provided a solution. Its Article 16 stated that an alternative way to pay taxes for firms operating under federal concessions was that these firms should cede 49 percent of their shares to either a public investment society or to a public trusteeship, which would sell those shares to the public in general. Neither option was acceptable for the concessionaires, and a long negotiation process started. Though again, the terms of the negotiation are not known, there are some clues that show how the pressure of the concessionaires was exercised. According to a very prominent media entrepreneur, in those months, in a meeting with President Díaz Ordaz,

²⁰ "Ley de Ingresos de la Federación", *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, December 29th 1961.

²¹ This legal disposition to pay 1.25 percent of their gross incomes appeared in the annual Income Law until 1979, when it was omitted without any explanation. Mejía Barquera, (1999a), p.11.

Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta, who was leading an important number of other concessionaires in the negotiation, even threatened the President that if no favourable agreement was reached they would renounce in that very moment the concessions which they held on radio and TV.²² The outcome of such negotiations was to be seen after six months, in June 1961, when a "third way" of payment was announced. The Decree published in the *Official Daily* established that, along with the two forms of payment announced in December 1968, the concessionaires could also pay this tax on federal concessions by ceding the State the 12.5 percent of their daily commercial air-time for it to broadcast its programmes and messages.²³ This new air-time that the State obtained was called "Fiscal time".

In economic terms, the concessionaires could successfully defend their interest against the regime's attempt to control their gains. And this victory became more sound since, firstly, it was agreed that this "Fiscal time" allocated for public broadcastings was not accumulative, thus the time that was not profited by the State per day would be lost. Secondly, as with the "State time", the government was in reality unable to elaborate programmes or broadcast any information that could successfully cover the 12.5 percent of daily air time, and therefore this payment actually became a fiscal subsidy.²⁴ In any case, the programmes transmitted by the government were presented at low-rating times. Thirdly, along with this Presidential Decree, a second one was published that same day commanding the Secretariat of Communications and Transports to automatically renew all existent concessions for another twenty years.²⁵

However, if the government ceded again to the pressures of the concessionaires on the economic side of the regulation, it added two conditions that were not negotiable since they tightened its political control over broadcasting: one was related to the concessionaires

²² Interview with Guillermo Salas Vargas, Vicepresident of Núcleo Radio Mil, August 2000.

²³ "Acuerdo Presidencial del 27 de junio de 1969 relativo al pago de impuestos sobre concesiones de actividades de interés público", *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, June 28th 1969.

²⁴ In this regard, though in August 1969 the Federal Television Stations Network was created, and was assigned 37 channels throughout the country, it was unable to operate until 1972, when President Echeverría transformed it into Cultural Television of Mexico, which later changed its name into Rural Television of Mexico and Television of the Mexican Republic. This inconsistency reveals the lack of public alternative projects to the commercial television.

²⁵ "Acuerdo Presidencial por el que se autoriza a la SCT a expedir nuevos títulos de concesión a los actuales concesionarios en materia de radio y televisión, del 27 de junio de 1969", *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, June 28th 1969.

obligation to improve the quality of their programming. Though this sounds rhetorical and vague, it gave the regime the faculty to supervise their performance on this aspect every five years with the possibility of having the concessions revoked in case of the inadequate fulfilling of this obligation. The other was more concrete: it was agreed that when the Executive considered that any material or topic presented—or about to be presented—might result inconvenient for the public peace and order, it could make the concessionaires the necessary observations, which are mandatory according to Article 101 of the LFRT, and, in case of not attending them, to apply the corresponding sanctions. The regime secured again the political control over broadcasting through these dispositions, which actually show the limits on the topics it was disposed to negotiate. It is possible that the decision of the regime to have inserted in the Income Law of the Federation the new tax and the alternatives it initially give to the concessionaires to pay it, were moved by the recent student repression and massacre of October 2nd 1968. The regime wanted to secure stronger controls over radio and television, in spite of the fact that the media did not report on the massacre in all its crude reality. In these negotiations, the regime was prepared to cede to the pressures of the concessionaires on the economic matters, in exchange for political discipline.

The third example of this form of negotiation—in which the government firstly proposed to reduce the economic benefits of the concessionaires and control their gains, then the latter pressed for maintaining their privileges, and at the end, they advanced their economic interests in reward for accepting the political control of the regime over broadcasting—took place during the Echeverría administration (1970-1976). The inauguration of this government was deeply marked by the recent events of 1968 (when the president was Secretary of *Gobernación*). As will be seen in Chapter Three, the new administration was characterised by an intensification of the populist and nationalist rhetoric. In the case of the broadcasting media, this discourse was highly critical of the negative impact of private television programming on the education of the masses, the formation of citizens and the cultural development of the country.

It is quite telling that on his first day of government President Echeverría created the Under-Secretariat of Radio Broadcasting, as part of the Secretariat of Communications and

Transports.²⁶ In May 15th 1971 Echeverría criticised the role of private television in the following terms, a masterpiece of his populist rhetoric:

We need that those who manage the mass media understand that the future of the economy, within which their sponsors and advertisers labour, is linked to the highest social conceptions of our people... If we do not find the way to develop this task of harmony and understanding, what is done at school will be destroyed –and it is already being destroyed—outside it (NB: on the TV screens).²⁷

By November 1971, top ranking government officials openly criticised the way radio and television were operating in Mexico. On November 4th, the Secretary of Public Education declared that the Commission for Radio Broadcasting would carefully evaluate the impact of radio and TV programmes on the education of the people.²⁸ However, a more radical position was presented by a close advisor to the president, Alfredo Leal Cortés, who said that if public opinion was supportive, the government could even consider the possibility of “nationalising the media” [sic] –though by law no concession was awarded to foreigners.²⁹ Criticism against private television and radio continued and in January 29th 1972 the Under-Secretary of Radio Broadcasting announced that the government was ready to make complete use of the 12.5 percent of fiscal air time it had at its disposal by law, and that a new and stricter Federal Law of Radio and Television was already being prepared.³⁰

Under these circumstances rumours began, that were to be confirmed later on, about the recent acquisition by the government of 72 percent of the shares of Channel 13 XHDF (see Chapter Four). On March 15th it was publicly announced that the government was then the

²⁶ The faculties of such dependency were: To analyse and resolve the petitions for radio and television concessions and permissions; to impose the corresponding sanctions in case of violations of the laws on the part of the concessionaires or permissionaires; to produce and transmit the programmes of radio and television of the Secretariat of Communications and Transports; and to establish consulting links with the National Chamber of Radio and Television.

²⁷ Cited in Jorge Alberto Lozoya, “La TV estatal en México: notas sobre un intento”, in *Foro Internacional*, vol. XIV, no.3, January-March 1974, p.403.

²⁸ *El Día*, November 4th 1971. The Commission for Radio Broadcasting was the public organ already referred to above, which was created in July 1969 and directly dependent on the Secretariat of *Gobernación*, whose task was to make the best use of the 12.5 percent of the fiscal time, to supervise that the concessionaires do transmit public programmes on that time, to study the developments of radio and television, and to advise the Federal Executive in matters of radio and television. Below it will be seen that some of their functions overlapped with the National Council on Radio and Television (created in 1960), and eventually the Commission duties were shifted to focus mainly on the edition and transmission of the political parties programmes. But as said before, it was never really operating.

²⁹ *Excelsior*, November 15th 1971.

³⁰ *Excelsior*, January 30th 1972.

owner of all the shares of the channel and of some of the radio stations of the Grupo Radio Centro, which belonged to the entrepreneur Francisco Aguirre. In any case, the acquisition of the channel was the response of the government to its own crisis of legitimacy, since it was believed within the presidential closest circles that only by having its own mass media could the regime secure the correct transmission of messages according to its own interests.³¹ The actions of the government to increase its direct participation on television did not cease there. One week later, the government announced the creation of the Rural Television of the Federal Government composed of a network of 100 television stations. This network was shortly afterwards renamed Cultural Television of Mexico and finally Television of the Mexican Republic (TRM). This new trend towards public television in Mexico was supposed to promote, according to the government, "social integration and modernisation by going beyond the purely commercial character of private television".³² In this way, the Echeverría administration was apparently defying the traditional *status quo* that had been established between the regime and the media entrepreneurs for more than three decades.

The media businessmen did not wait long in expressing their opinions. Through the Chamber of Radio and Television (CIRT) they stressed "their patriotism, their role as social transmission mechanisms of information and the national character of their programming".³³ In July 1972 there took place an important meeting between the president and the most important concessionaires in which the latter not only presented a comprehensive diagnosis of the programming in order to show that it was in accordance with the Mexican taste, but most importantly, they all reaffirmed their complete disposition towards co-operating and collaborating with the government.³⁴ That same month saw the beginning of transmissions on radio and TV of a series of short adverts which emphasised the positive character of the private media both for economic development and for public peace. For instance, there was transmitted the following brief spot: "Radio and television

³¹ The public Channel 11 had been in operation since 1959, though it was not optimum for the Echeverría group's interests, since its signal was essentially received only in the metropolitan area surrounding Mexico City, and secondly, it was already operated by the National Polytechnic Institute.

³² These words are taken from the inauguration discourse of the public operation of Channel 13 given by its director general, Enrique González Pedrero, in January 1974. (Curiously 23 years later he was elected Senator by the Democratic Revolutionary Party).

³³ Arredondo and Sánchez Ruiz, (1987), pgs.160-161.

³⁴ *Antena*, n.12, July 1972, pgs.1-2.

collaborate with the administration and the public order by transmitting the voice of the government to all the Republic. Radio and television, trustworthy instantaneous communication".³⁵ Moreover, the concessionaires decidedly pointed out that, "in contrast to their collaboration to public peace", there were others which "predicted violence". In the monthly CIRT bulletin, *Antena*, they clearly stated their position: "More than a century ago, the Communist groups predicted violence to create a new society. With Marx's and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* there started the systematic attack on the material and spiritual values of Western Culture. Private property and the family are attacked, while class fighting is exalted in order to inaugurate the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transitory and violent stage to transit from a bourgeois society to a socialist society".³⁶ In this way, not only the private broadcasters were sending out a clear message to the ruling elite underlying their crucial role in the maintenance of public peace and order, but they were also pointing out who the "true addicts to violence" were: the left-wing organisations and groups. The way to reduce the influence of such groups was to convince the regime to "work together in harmony". But the aims of such declarations were also to warn President Echeverría that if he insisted upon continuing with his populist rhetoric, the effects would be dangerous for the *status quo* and may bring about unpleasant consequences for the economic development. They also wanted to warn those public officials who supported a possible – though not probable—nationalisation of the media, that the CIRT was prepared to fight for its interests. Thus, the position of the concessionaires was one of reinforcing their loyalties to the regime and renewing, in closer terms, their compromise with the government's political interests, but at the same time they made clear that any attempt to alter the private operation of the media would encounter serious resistance. In accordance to this attitude, the concessionaires decided to elaborate a consistent public relations policy "to inform public opinion" about the advantages of private property, of the need to oppose "external influences", and the great advantages that the citizens had in "living in a country of peace".³⁷

³⁵ In Fernández Christlieb (1996), p.133.

³⁶ *Antena*, n.38, September 1974, p.3.

³⁷ In another bulletin they explained that the real problems for the country were located on the Left: "We now live in a time when the followers of Marx, Engels and Lennin consider that private property of the means of production is harmful of the majority's interests. We, in the CIRT, know that such ideas are not true". *Antena*, n.34, May 1974, p.2.

Again the government accepted the terms of this mutually supportive approach. On October 4th 1972 it was announced that there would not be issued any new federal law for radio and television, but only a regulation of the existing LFRT of 1960. The government, whose intention was never to seriously challenge private property, accepted the terms offered by the concessionaires for a "more explicit alliance" in favour of stability and order. The media, especially private television, became crucial for such purposes.³⁸

The Regulation of the Federal Law of Radio and Television (RLFRT), published in April 4th 1973, showed the renewal of this agreement between the commercial media and the regime: the profits of the concessionaires would not be restricted or controlled, but the regime established new mechanisms to secure political control over broadcasting. In this regard Article 9 of the RLFRT created a new General Direction of Information within the Secretariat of *Gobernación* whose task were essentially to "point out the degree of priority" of the programmes to be transmitted during the daily thirty minutes of air time that corresponded to the State time according to Article 59 of the LFRT of 1960 (Article 9 of the RLFRT). More specifically, Article 9 authorised the General Direction of Information to perform some tasks that implied political surveillance. Some of them were:

- 1) To co-ordinate the State's transmissions, indicating the level of priority for each of them, and controlling their contents.
- 2) To oversee that the transmissions presented cope with the legal dispositions, and in case they do not, to impose the corresponding sanctions.
- 3) To authorise the transmission of foreign material or foreign language transmissions.
- 4) To order nation-wide transmissions through all the broadcasting networks and stations of the material or programmes that the government consider to be relevant.

Other important articles of the RLFRT that must be mentioned for its political relevance are the following:

- As mentioned, Article 59 of the LFRT of 1960 stipulated that the State could use up to thirty minutes a day of transmissions free of any charge on radio and television. This

³⁸ Just to take one example of the constant support that Televisa --whose creation in January 1973 will be discussed in Chapter Four --gave to the regime's permanence, one can cite the strong promotional that were presented on its channels whenever there was a national holiday, in which it was always stressed that Mexico, in subtle contrast with many of the rest of the Latin American countries, enjoyed public peace, growth and development.

State time could be used in a single bloc of time or it could be divided up during the day. Article 12 of the RLFRT stated that the minimum amount of time into which the State time could be divided was of five minutes.

- Article 36 of the RLFRT, section I, prohibited all transmissions that could result in being “against State security, national integrity, public peace and order”.
- As mentioned, Article 90 of the LFRT of 1960 created the National Council of Radio and Television (CNRT), as an advisory body to the Federal Executive in such matters, composed of four members of the federal administration, two representatives of the media and two representatives of the unions. Article 49 of the RLFRT added a permanent secretary to the council and another representative of the media unions.
- Article 51 of the RLFRT punctuated the faculties of the CNRT, established in a more general level in Article 91 of the LFRT of 1960. Among them was the faculty to ask the concessionaires to classify their programming into news broadcasts, sports programmes, entertainment, and so forth; and ask them to provide them with weekly information on their programming.
- Article 52 of the RLFRT, citing the content of Articles 61 and 91 of the LFRT of 1960, reaffirmed that the CNRT would “co-ordinate the transmissions” of the State time and would establish the time-tables for these transmissions in accordance with the concessionaires, “who will previously be heard on such matters”.

The RLFRT of 1973 sought to expand their control over the political contents of the programming, though at the same time, it sought to grant a beneficial economic *status quo* for the concessionaires. And, in spite of the relatively frequent criticisms with which different government officials –included President Echeverria—pointed out the deficiencies and low quality of actual programmes, when it came to action it was only to make clear the limits of the presentation of political information and material. Great pains were taken not to pull the rope so tight as to endanger the economic interests of the concessionaires by altering the dominant private forms of exploitation of public concessions, or by limiting the profits of the entrepreneurs. As long as the concessionaires respected the tolerated political limits, their economic interests would not be harmed. In this regard President Echeverria was clear when, at the end of his term, he was asked about the possibilities of nationalising

the private radio, as some of his collaborators suggested at the beginning of his administration. His answer was emphatically "No... It seems to me that the bureaucratisation would be terrible... That is, the thesis here is very clear [to maintain the concessions on private hands], otherwise we will not be living in liberty, nor in the mix-economy model we have proposed".³⁹

This sort of understanding between the regime and the concessionaires had been the non-written rule for decades. The news broadcasts reflected precisely this collaboration between the concessionaires and the regime, since they reflected, on the one hand, the general support of the regime's legitimacy --and to the president in particular--, and on the other, they also presented their particular viewpoints on Mexican society, which on many occasions turned out to be highly conservative, and opposed to any sort of left wing ideologies.⁴⁰

As for specific advantages conceded to the concessionaires by the RLFRT, one must recall that in 1960, when referring to the amount of advertising that could be presented within one hour of broadcasting, Article 67 of the LFRT had established only that there must be "a prudent equilibrium between the commercial publicity and the rest of the programming". On the RLFRT, Article 41 repeated such a phrase and Article 42 defined how this "prudent equilibrium" was to be understood in matters of publicity. In the case of television it states that:

- a) The total time destined to advertising cannot be more than eighteen percent of the total transmission time.
- b) Between 8:00 p.m. and the closing of the transmissions the stations can use up to half of the total time destined to advertising (9 percent of the total transmission time).
- c) The commercial breaks presented during a single programme transmission with natural continuity cannot be more than six per hour and each break cannot exceed two minutes.
- d) The commercial breaks presented during times in which no single programme with natural continuity is transmitted cannot be more than ten per hour and each break cannot exceed a minute and a half.

³⁹ *Antena*, n.52, November-December 1975, p.3.

⁴⁰ See Chapter One for the analysis of the entrepreneurial positions in relation to the Mexican regime's foreign policy.

In the case of radio broadcasting it states that,

- a) The total time destined to advertising cannot exceed 40 percent of the total daily air-time.
- b) The commercial breaks presented during a single programme transmission with natural continuity cannot be more than twelve per hour and each break cannot exceed one minute and a half.
- c) The commercial breaks presented during times in which no single programme with natural continuity is transmitted cannot be more than fifteen per hour and each break cannot exceed two minutes.

As if such restrictions were harsh, Article 43 permitted the concessionaires to ask the Secretariat of *Gobernación* to “authorise a temporary increase in the advertising time allowed” upon request and during special transmissions. So, in reality longer advertising time could be obtained by the stations. Moreover, the Commission for Radio Broadcasting was supposed to supervise the fulfilment of these dispositions, but in reality since the beginning the government let the concessionaires exceed those ad-time limits, only supervising in cases when governmental authorities wanted to exercise pressure over a specific broadcasting station.⁴¹ In this way, the regime made it clear to the concessionaires that, though the new dispositions might eventually give the State the possibility to supervise the contents of the broadcastings, it would continue to support the development and growth of the private interests in the industry as long as they did not trespass certain limits and maintain their loyalty to it.

These remarks contrast with the conclusions of some researchers like Bohman or Fernández Christlieb,⁴² for whom the economic benefits that the concessionaires obtained are explained by the incapacity of the State to defend and impose its own projects and conditions vis-à-vis the strength of this private sector. This seems to be a partial remark. The 1940s saw the establishment of a convenient collaboration between the regime and the private media concessionaires, based upon the economic support given by the former in exchange for the media remaining politically loyal to the regime. This arrangement gave

⁴¹ Interview with the journalist and director general of the weekly *Écetera* Raúl Trejo Delarbre (June 2000).

⁴² Bohmann, (1997), p.110; Fernández Christlieb, (1996), pgs.147-171.

the concessionaires the possibility to press on the government in order to influence its policies and decrees in relation to media economic affairs. However, the regime drew a clear line that could not be trespassed: the regime would always secure by all means the ultimate political control over broadcasting. And it was not only a matter of legal regulation, but one of political control implied by the legal precepts as well. For the regime it was not enough to have a "tacit promise" from the concessionaires of their loyalty. It also had to develop mechanisms to secure it. As I have shown, if it was true that the concessionaires negotiated with success their interests against the regime's original projects, these gains remained limited within the economic sphere and the regime was never disposed to negotiate any concession that might have supposed the loss of the ultimate political control over broadcasting.

Though, for the regime the "categorical imperative" was to keep the media loyal to it and, at the same time, to reinforce its legitimacy through their transmissions. As long as this situation maintained and the concessionaires respected this limit, the different governments, with more or less disposition, accepted to negotiate—even to cede to—the demands of the media businessmen on the two most important aspects for the entrepreneurs: advertising and taxation. Therefore, the strength of this group was located in these aspects, which were also the most relevant for them. Undeniably, the concessionaires were successful and strong in advancing and defending their interests on these points.

One can finally pose the question of whether or not it was true that there was a collaboration between the regime and the concessionaires. If there was, then why did the regime attempt from time to time to place tighter controls over the economic benefits of the concessionaires? According to what we have discussed here, it might be possible to suppose that the real aim behind the "economic controls" that the regime proposed with all its projects, was actually directed at reinforcing the more political aspects of control, threatening only the economic gains and benefits of the media in order to better secure political control. By proposing or presenting a project that contained a list of unacceptable regulations on economic aspects for the media, the regime was then able to be flexible on such topics in exchange for securing or reinforcing political control. This may sound a quite Machiavellian attitude on the part of the regime and also of a long-term consciousness that is difficult to prove. Therefore, it remains only a hypothesis.

What can be seen from the outcome of the negotiations is that, though the Chamber could not alter the terms of the regime's ultimate political control on broadcasting, the CIRT was highly effective in defending the economic interests of the concessionaires. Moreover, it was even successful in imposing most of its points of view despite the different government's legal projects to control or reduce its economic profits and benefits. In this sense, the concessionaires were, in economic matters, a highly influential and powerful interest group.

Some Remarks on the Media Entrepreneurs

This last section seeks to make some remarks about the use of a term such as "interest group" for encompassing all the concessionaires in Mexico. There were always important differences between Mexico City media entrepreneurs and those of other provinces. The differences did not stop at the geographical sphere, but they also called into question the apparent unity between Mexico City radio and television concessionaires. Discussing these differences is important for two main reasons. Firstly because it serves to highlight that the interests defended by the chamber coincided with the interests of its most important members—especially Televisa's or TM's at that time—and that they did not always reflect other members' interests (especially those of the provinces). Secondly because it serves to highlight that the differences between Mexico City's radio and television concessionaires, though not reflecting on a markedly divergent behaviour for decades, will provide for dissimilar attitudes in relation to politics in the future. This section concludes by analysing the first of these two points. The second is dealt within chapters four (TV) and five (radio). In his now classic book, *The Logic of Collective Action*, Mancur Olson analyses the formation of interest groups and the motives their members have in joining them.⁴³ Through simple reasoning he departs from two basic premises: A) When individuals have a common interest in attaining a political goal, this takes the form of a collective good, since once it is achieved its benefits can be enjoyed by each individual in the group, regardless of how much he/she contributed individually to it. B) Olson departs from certain assumptions

⁴³ M. Olson. *The Logic of Collective Action*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1965.

on the rationality of human behaviour, on their economically self-interested attitudes, and on the fact that they have perfect information in a specific moment for masking their choices. Olson uses these premises to remark that if all this is true, interest groups are not formed on the basis of a common interest, since,

If the members of a large group rationally seek to maximise their personal welfare, they will not act to advance their common or group objectives unless there is coercion to force them to do so, or unless some separate incentive, distinct from the achievement of the common or group interest, is offered to the members of the group individually on the condition that they help bear the costs or burdens involved in the achievement of the group objectives.⁴⁴

Therefore, the question of whether interest groups will emerge, and how well they can recruit members and contributions, depends upon their ability to supply members with individual and relatively concrete benefits that lie beyond the discourse on the "common interest". In the case of Mexican broadcasters, the question on the recruitment of members does not represent any debate, since according to the Law of Chambers, joining the corresponding chamber was mandatory for private entrepreneurs. However, Olson's theory is useful for understanding how a dominant group within the CIRT established its own goals as the Chamber's goals, and also how the rest became free-riders most of the time. In this sense, the weaker concessionaires did not have to share the costs for the actions taken, but at the same time whenever there was a disagreement regarding their goals and those of the stronger concessionaires, they did not have the possibility of furthering them. Finally, Olson's ideas are useful not only for explaining the internal differences within a group, but also for noting that whenever necessary—and possible—CIRT members would seek to advance their own interests outside the general channels of the chamber. It is helpful to consider in further chapters (Chapters 5 and 8) how radio concessionaires had a different reaction than the TV concessionaires when economic circumstances changed.

In Mexico, the CIRT became almost from the start "naturally" dominated by the great broadcasters, gathered around TM, later Televisa. The first president of the Chamber was Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta and during the first thirty years of existence, the Chamber had fifteen presidents from which nine were directly linked to TM and Televisa.⁴⁵ The success

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.2.

⁴⁵ Cremoux, (1974), pgs. 16-17.

of the Azcárraga group was due not only to his ability for expanding to other important economic sectors –from tourist services and film production, to the control of other economic organisations, like the National Publicity Association--,⁴⁶ but most of all to his ability to establish narrow links with the groups of the “revolutionary family” that took the control of political power since the 1940s.

The Azcárraga family belong to the entrepreneurial groups located mainly in the central part of Mexico –like the Balleres, Vallina, Alarcón, Legorreta, etc.--, who have basically supported the “revolutionary regime” as represented first by the Obregón-Calles group and later by the official party’s presidents. In exchange they have obtained enormous benefits for developing their industries and businesses. In contrast, the other strong entrepreneurial group in the country, the Monterrey group (whose origins date from the late XIX century), always had a more critical attitude towards the regime, due to the interventionist character of the State in economic matters. Though they never challenged the regime in any direct manner, the Monterrey group confronted the regime’s policies in some important occasions, like during the Cárdenas and the Echeverría’s administrations, and it supported the creation of the Centre-Right *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN) in 1939.⁴⁷ The entrepreneurs of central Mexico preferred to align with the regime and never tried to support the political opposition parties. Instead they benefited from close links with the political elite, as was the clear case of the Azcárraga family. Though this group led the broadcasting media industry, there had been, since the beginning, some important radio concessionaires who opposed the leadership of Azcárraga.

⁴⁶ A key figure within the Azcárraga group was Clemente Serna, owner of local radio stations in Monterrey and business partner of Azcárraga in RPM, who occupied diverse charges within the private sector organisations, like the National Commerce Chamber (CONCANACO) and the National Industrial Chamber (CONCAMIN). When television started in the 1950s he became very important in persuading various entrepreneurs to insert their announcements and propaganda in the new medium –in which not too many were confident at the time—and therefore in the great expansion of television. See Mejía Barquera, (1989), pgs.170-171.

⁴⁷ Other revealing incidents that show the opposition of this Monterrey group to the “revolutionary regime” was its support of the candidacy of General Almazán, who was running for the presidency against the official candidate General Ávila Camacho in 1940. They also opposed the educational policies of President López Mateos. (For a study about the relationships between the PAN and the Monterrey group see Soledad Loaeza, *El Partido Acción Nacional la larga marcha, 1939-1994 : oposición leal y partido de protesta*, Mexico City, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999). Here it must be mentioned that this industrial group received a concession for operating a television station through its firm *Televisión Independiente de México* (TIM). The inauguration of XHTM TV Channel 8 started on September 1st 1968 with the broadcast of the annual presidential address to the Congress. A brief period of competition then started in the private Mexican

Almost from the start of the radio industry in Mexico there emerged a certain duality between the regions and the centre.⁴⁸ Outside Mexico City there were other regional groups who formed important nuclei among the radio entrepreneurs, and who had not shared the points of view of Azcárraga both towards the radio industry and towards the political regime. Since the late 1930s, some local radio entrepreneurs elaborated a project in order to create a "common front" against the domination of the centre (i.e. of the Azcárraga group and the Mexico City radio industry). One of the most active promoters of this idea was the northern entrepreneur Pedro Meneses, who founded four important radio stations in Ciudad Juárez, in the state of Chihuahua, between 1930 and 1936.⁴⁹ He favoured the idea of consolidating local radio stations and of preventing that the capital's stations—mainly XEW and XEQ—absorbed them or make them dependent on them through programming. Another entrepreneur who supported the development of radio alternatives to those of Mexico City was Rafael Cutberto Navarro, owner of a radio station in the city of Leon, XEFM, and who in 1948 decided to found a radio network, *Radio Cadena Nacional*, which became for many years the rival of Azcárraga's *Radio Programas de México*, and whose headquarters were, paradoxically, located in Mexico City.

In the 1940s many other stations began to appear outside Mexico City founded by both new entrepreneurs or entrepreneurs who had initiated in the 1930s but who did not have many opportunities to compete against the pressure of the centre. The *Comité Coordinador de Radiodifusoras de los Estados* was founded in the 1950s for the defence of the interests of local radio stations. Nevertheless, they could never seriously challenge the power of the Azcárraga group, nor impose their points of view in the Chamber when confronted to those of Azcárraga. Maybe the best example of this can be seen in the conflict around the installation of re-transmission stations.

During the 1940s and 1950s Azcárraga wanted to install in different provinces some radio stations whose only purpose was to re-transmit the signal sent from his Mexico City stations, XEW and XEQ. This action was intended to increase the audience of these stations and at the same time would permit them to charge Mexico City's announcers with higher

television, but it ended at the beginning of the 1970s with the fusion of TM with TIM to create Televisa. This will be discussed in Chapter 4.

⁴⁸ See Fátima Fernández Christlieb, *La radio mexicana. Centro y Regiones*, Mexico City, Juan Pablos, 1997.

⁴⁹ During the early 1950s he got also a concession for television, XEJ-TV in the same northern city.

advertising tariffs with a minimal operation cost, since the installation of such types of stations did not demand any more than a pair of technicians and operators. The local radio concessionaires opposed such stations with the argument that they would generate an unfair competition for the clientele, since they could afford to offer the local announcers lower tariffs and wider audiences. Many small radio stations were not prepared to compete with the quality of the programmes produced in Mexico City, and thus, the establishment of these re-transmission stations would make them go into bankrupt. Other argument were posed by more important local concessionaires, such as Meneses, for whom these stations represented an intervention from the centre and endangered the development of local programming. In any case, the local concessionaires presented their case before the Chamber and the Under-Secretary of Communications and Transports, Walter. C. Buchanan. The president in turn of the CIRT, José Luis Fernández Lara, was also the legal counsellor of Azcárraga. Buchanan was also a close friend of Azcárraga (his brother worked for him). The outcome of the conflict, unsurprisingly, favoured the installation of the re-transmission stations by the mid-1950s, accelerating also the affiliation of local station into larger networks in order to survive.

Though the dominance of the Azcárraga family in the radio industry could not be challenged by other regional and local concessionaires, in Mexico City there emerged in the 1940s other important radio entrepreneurs who increasingly won relevant spaces and influence within the radio industry. In the 1940s the imminent advent of television redirected the interests of the radio giants, especially of Azcárraga, who started to concentrate his efforts on obtaining a concession for the new medium and, therefore, leaving some free spaces for other concessionaires to grow.⁵⁰ In this way, after 1945 the two great radio networks, the XEW-NBC and the XEQ-CBS reduced their participation in broadcasting activity⁵¹ and this created new opportunities for other entrepreneurs to take the spaces left by the traditional radio magnates. New radio stations started to appear all over the country covering mostly local and regional audiences. New names, like Guillermo Salas

⁵⁰ An example of this is the fact that in 1948 the works on the construction of a huge building that was to allocate the headquarters of Mr. Azcárraga's radio stations, XEW and XEWW (short wave) and that pompously was to be called "Radiopolis", were called off. When the works were renewed the project they were suppose to conclude was replaced by the building of television studies, called Televicentro, which was inaugurated in January 1952.

Peyró, Francisco Ibarra or Manuel Suárez, appeared in Mexico City and became very important within the industry. And new radio networks started to compete with Azcárraga's RPM, as *Radiodifusoras Unidas Mexicanas, S.A. (RUMSA)*, *Grupo Acir*, *Núcleo Radio Mil*, *Corporación Mexicana de Radiodifusión*, *Sociedad Mexicana de Radio*, or *Radio Cadena Nacional*.⁵²

Though by the 1950s the broadcasting industry was highly heterogeneous and there were many radio entrepreneurs, the advent of television consolidated the power of the Azcárraga group and though this group never did establish a complete monopoly over television concessions it became unquestionably the most important media group in the country.⁵³ His group dominated the Chamber and greatly shaped its interests, which became "common interests" for the rest. Since most of these common interests had to do with the preservation of the private commercial model of broadcasting, the rest of the members felt themselves represented by them, and followed the leadership of TM when defending them. These actions avoided the costs of facing adverse government decisions by themselves, but at the same time they consolidated the power of Azcárraga's corporation among the rest of the concessionaires. TM became unquestionably the *Primus inter pares* of broadcasters.

Nevertheless this leadership of TM, reflected in the Chambers actions, sometimes obscures the divisions that existed therein. If it is true that for most of this period, and seen from a general perspective, the concessionaires behaved as a group, the truth is that there were always important divisions not only among regions that opposed the pre-eminence of

⁵¹ Alma Rosa Alva de la Selva, "Radio: punta de lanza del consorcio", in Raul Trejo Delarbre, (coord.), *Las redes de Televisa*, Mexico City, Claves Latinoamericanas, 1988, p.130.

⁵² By 1970, along these networks, the most important radio networks in the country were also: Radiodifusoras Mexicanas (Radimsa), Organización Independiente de Mexico (OIR), Organización de Radiodifusoras Mexicanas Asociadas (ORMA), Radiodifusoras Asociadas (Rasa), Radioventas de Provincia (Ravepsa), Difusoras del Pacifico, Unión Radio, Agentes de Radio y Televisión, Central de Emisoras de Provincia, Radio Emisoras Independientes, Sistema Radiofónico and Radorama.

⁵³ In 1970 there were also other commercial television channels in operation, like Channel 8 (property of the Monterrey Group) and Channel 13 property of the radio entrepreneur Francisco Aguirre. Channel 13 unfortunately did not have the strength to compete against the two large television networks and its shares were finally acquired by the State at the beginning of the 1970s, as will be seen in Chapter 8. Outside Mexico City the most important TV network was *Telecadena Mexicana* that in 1970 had twelve channels in different cities. The film producer Manuel Barbachano Ponce founded in 1965 *Telecadena Mexicana*, which gathered local television channels in the provinces. In the early 1970s this network already had fifteen channels operating in the central and northern states of Mexico. The channels incorporated to *Televisión Independiente de Mexico*—five in 1969 and the rest in 1972—in order to have better chances to compete for publicity and advertising. However, according to Noriega and Leach, regional and local publicity still preferred to be announced in the national television channels—the ones of Mexico City—and by 1975 the network was practically bankrupt. De Noriega and F. Leach, (1979), p.23.

Mexico City, but also among radio and television concessionaires. Their apparent "homogeneity" has a lot to do with the maintenance of the more or less stable political and economic conditions over the years before the 1970s. But things were about to change, and as is discussed in further chapters, the most remarkable changes for the media would occur at an economic level, conditioning different answers from radio than from televisión, for facing and adapting to the new challenges. Therefore, though a definition of the concessionaires as an homogeneous interest group might seem adequate, at first sight, important differences soon become noticeable as soon as the years of economic crisis altered the conditions in which the industry had been developing.

Part II

**Political Liberalisation and Broadcasting, 1970s-
1994**

Chapter Three

The Political Context I, 1970s-1994

Many things changed in the Mexican political landscape after the decades in which the rule of the PRI seemed to be uncontested and unchallenged. The Political Reform of 1977 was not the first, but certainly was the most important measure for liberalising the political arena after the student massacre of 1968, which directly questioned the legitimacy of the post-revolutionary regime. That reform can be considered to be the starting point of a political liberalisation process led by a regime still confident of its capacity to re-distribute economic and social benefits. Such re-distributive capacities, explained by decades of economic growth, gave the regime the overall support of the entrepreneurs and the power to incorporate and subordinate the popular sectors.

Political liberalisation was essentially directed towards the transformation of the electoral arena and the party system at a time when the pressure for democratisation was still low. Political pressure came mainly from the middle sectors; sectors that had not been part of the historical corporatist structures, and whose demands were considered to be easily channelled through the electoral arena and the party system. In any case, by the late 1970s, opposition parties were still weak and all of them, including the PAN, had a low level of penetration and "representativity" within the society. All these conditions favoured the development of a protracted transition in which, in the absence of strong social mobilisation and pressures for political change, originally weak opposition parties had more to win by playing within the regime's rules than by challenging them.¹

However, after the total collapse of the protectionist economic model in 1982 and the growing incapacity of the regime to continue with re-distribution, the recently opened

¹ As Todd Eisenstadt has pointed out a characteristic of this kind of transitions is that the locus of change seems to take the form of continuous and prolonged struggles over the formal institutional playing field: "it appears that democratization is a 'war of attrition' of the authoritarian incumbents and opposition parties over the micro-institutional foundations of the transition... Indeed opposition parties have argued about the fairness of electoral institutions and electoral representation formulas in bids to 'sneak into the back door' to power sharing" (Todd Eisenstadt, "Eddies in the Third Wave: Protracted Transitions and Theories of Democratization", in *Democratization*, vol.7, no.3, Autumn 2000, p.4). Reynaldo Yunuen Ortega explains that "the Mexican transition is characterised as a protracted non-pacted transition, namely a transition that has been under way for more than 30 years, through struggle and incomplete reform, in which the governing coalition, instead of constructing new rules of the game to make a transition possible, has been fighting

electoral channels and the opposition parties were increasingly used by different social groups to initiate an "electoral dissidence" against the regime by voting against the PRI. At first, such dissidence was expressed as a "punishment vote" against the PRI—benefiting mostly the PAN—, nevertheless, it slowly moved throughout the 1980s into to a more conscious vote for opposition that by the end of the period studied here had created two clear alternatives to the PRI, the PAN and the PRD.

This chapter is divided in two parts. The first one discusses briefly the circumstances that inaugurated a political liberalisation process in Mexico and its unintended consequences for fostering what could be labelled as "the electoral dissidence" during the early 1980s. The second part shows the emergence of a more plural political arena during the late 1980s and early 1990s with the strengthening of opposition parties.

The Political Liberalisation Process: Circumstances and Consequences

According to O'Donnell and Schmitter, political liberalisation is a process of redefining and extending rights. In their own words,

It is indicative of the beginning of the transition that its emergence triggers a number of (often unintended) consequences which play an important role in ultimately determining the scope and extension of that process. By liberalization, we mean the process of making effective certain rights that protect both individuals and social groups from arbitrary or illegal acts committed by the state or third parties.²

O'Donnell and Schmitter also admit that liberalisation can exist without democratisation and they realise "the precarious dependence [of this process] upon governmental power". They also note that the government may well promote liberalisation "in the belief that by opening up certain spaces for individual and group action, they can relieve various pressures and obtain needed information and support *without* altering the structure of authority, that is, without becoming accountable to the citizenry for their actions or subjecting their claim to rule to fair and competitive elections;... in our discussion, we refer

'trench warfare' against opposition parties" (R.Y. Ortega, "Comparing Types of Transitions: Spain and Mexico", *Democratization*, Vol.7, no.3, Autumn 2000, p.68).

² Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, (1986), p.7.

to such cases as 'liberalized authoritarianism' (known also by their Spanish name of *dictablandas*).³ The liberalisation of an authoritarian regime implies certain important changes --like opening spaces for more autonomous political participation--, but this process does not guarantee the breakdown of authoritarianism. In the case of Mexico, liberalisation was an alternative for a regime that, in order to remain in power, needed to respond to further political demands through opening new spaces for participation essentially circumscribed to the electoral sphere.

Why were these reforms circumscribed to the electoral arena? Essentially for two reasons. The first reason is that still by the 1970s the party system in Mexico was characterised by a dominant official party, a series of semi-official opposition parties (covertly financed by the State) and an only truly and very weak opposition party, the *Partido Accion Nacional*, PAN. Therefore, the opening of the electoral channels was not considered to represent any danger to the position of the official party. Opposition was either fostered by the regime or had a low social penetration outside certain quite restricted urban circles, and a good reason for this was the fact that all parties were supposed to finance themselves through private funds, not public funds, which of course made it more problematic for any opposition to develop nation-wide bases of support. At the same time, it was obvious that the PRI was receiving support from the regime besides the regular fees and contributions of its members. The outcome was a weak opposition without the capacity to penetrate in widely diverse social sectors and regions. In the case of the PAN, by the early 1970s its penetration outside major urban areas was greatly reduced.⁴

The weaknesses of opposition parties were reflected in their low ability to present candidates for all the electoral districts in dispute, even during federal elections (Table 3.1). In the elections of 1961, with a simple majority electoral system, the PAN was able to present only 98 candidates for the 178 electoral districts.⁵ Table 3.1 shows that between 1964 and 1976 only the semi-official opposition party *Partido Popular Socialista* (PPS)

³ *Ibid.*, p.9.

⁴ For a complete history of the PAN see Soledad Loaeza, (1999).

⁵ In that electoral process, the PRI won in 172 districts, the PAN in five and the Popular Party in one. For a detailed account of the performance of opposition parties in the Mexican electoral system see: Manuel Alejandro Guerrero, "Los avances de la oposición en el Congreso Federal", in the *Parliamentary Encyclopaedia of Mexico*, series IV *El Congreso y las Políticas Nacionales*, vol.II *El Congreso de la Unión y la Política Económica de México*, no. 3, *El Congreso en las Reformas Políticas de México*, Mexico City, 1998.

was able on two occasions to postulate candidates for all the electoral districts. This was due more to the support of the regime than to its wide militant basis from which to draw candidates.

Table 3.1
Number of Opposition Party Candidates in the 1964-1976 Electoral Processes

Party/year	1964	1967	1970	1973	1976
PAN	174	176	171	172	135
PPS	166	175	178	194	187
PARM	113	123	114	149	194
Total Districts	178	178	178	194	196

Source: Elaborated with data from *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, XLVI Legislatura, 1964, año I, tomo 1, 30 de agosto de 1964. *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, XLVII Legislatura, 1967, año I, tomo 1, 22 de agosto de 1967. *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, XLVIII Legislatura, 1970, año I, tomo 1, 29 agosto de 1970. *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, XLIX Legislatura, 1973, año I, tomo 1, 18 de agosto de 1973. *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, L Legislatura, 1976, año I, tomo 1, 24 de agosto de 1976.

A second reason for opening the electoral system as a channel for dissidence was the belief that, in any case, it was only a matter of minority urban sectors' protests. Since the popular sectors, which comprised of the vast majority of the population, were in many ways linked—and controlled—by the corporatist networks, and the entrepreneurs were enjoying the benefits of growth and protectionist policies, any independent complaint would come only from urban middle sectors. Such claims, being restricted to certain urban groups, could very well be institutionally—and safely—channelled through the party system; a system that was not considered in itself to represent a real challenge for the regime. The majority was believed to be siding with the regime, especially since economic growth was permitting intense re-distributive policies through the formal and the informal tentacles of corporatism. Thus, the opening the electoral arena seemed to be a strategic response taking some pressure off the system, especially after 1968.

The year 1968 marked the political limit of a regime that had been relatively successful in generating conditions for development without democratisation. The student rebellion served as a serious warning on the exhaustion of the "golden years" of the post-revolutionary political agreements that had enabled the regime to consolidate since the

early 1930s. After the student massacre of October 2nd 1968, the regime compromised its own revolutionary and progressive ideology, since in a way the symbols of the Mexican revolution were used to justify repression against its most progressive classes: the middle sectors. That moment conditioned a gradual change in the perceptions, in the behaviour and in the decisions of all those who lived it, and these transformations altogether started to shape a new kind of regime.⁶ The student massacre became undoubtedly, the first great defeat for the regime.

In the years to follow, the regime tried to re-design its relations with society, and to elaborate new policies to include the urban middle classes. These classes comprised of new social sectors that had been growing outside corporatism, but benefiting of the expansion of the State's policies and of the economic growth. To meet that end, the Echeverría administration (1971-1976) launched an economic and a political strategy. The former shifted the focus from NDP growth—as has been the strategy since the late 1950s—to a new emphasis on income re-distribution and employment.⁷ This strategy was based on the more active role of the State in the economy and on raising public expenditures.⁸ The project

⁶ Soledad Loaeza, "1968: los orígenes de la transición", in Ilan Semo *et al.*, *La transición interrumpida. México 1968-1988*, Mexico City, Iberoamericana University and Nueva Imagen, 1993, pgs.17-18.

⁷ The "Stabilizing Development" strategy (mid-1950s-1969) was designed to promote high growth rates combined with low inflation rates in order to support industrial development and at the same time restricting public expenditures. Before this strategy, the government had financed its investments mainly through the use of monetary policy, which naturally created inflationary pressures. The economic group led by the Secretary of Finance, Ortiz Mena, believed that the government should not be responsible of the inflationary process, and therefore, government expenditures must be reduced. The alternative to promoting investment was the use of a favourable fiscal policy for new investors and firms. It was expected then that this new policy would generate a re-investment of utilities, and they also conceded a great variety of fiscal exemptions for productive investments. In this way the fiscal policy was used as a promotion tool instead of a collecting mechanism, and thus, it created a dam that restricted public expenditures. The State also compromised to keep low the prices of the products and services it offered, to concede various subsidies for investments and productions, and to maintain a favourable exchange rate Peso-U.S. Dollar in order to benefit imports (since at that time Mexican exports were reduced). For a more detailed analysis of this economic strategy see Leopoldo Solís, *El desarrollo estabilizador*, textos de las conferencias dictadas en el Colegio Nacional en mayo de 1977.

⁸ Government expenditures were raised, and the public sector expanded; guarantee-fixed prices were established for agricultural products; workers received more benefits in education, housing, health and social security programmes. The social budget was increased as a percentage of the GDP from 5.9 in 1970 to 9.3 in 1976; public investment rates grew in areas such as electricity, oil and steel industries from 17.2 percent in the 1961-1971 period to 39 percent between 1971-1976. The public sector economic participation raised from 11.6 percent of the GDP in 1970 to 17.2 in 1976 (Data from Matilde Luna Ledesma, *Los empresarios y el cambio político. México 1970-1987*, Mexico City, UNAM and Era, 1992, p.39, and R. Villareal, *et al.*, "La empresa pública", in Bueno, (1977), p.98). As an example of this new role of the State we have the fact that between 1970 and 1976 State-owned enterprises grew in number from 84 to 845 (E.V.K. Fitzgerald, "Stabilization Policy in Mexico: the Fiscal Deficit and Macroeconomic Equilibrium, 1960-1977", in

would be sustained not by a fiscal reform (as was initially considered, but this solution was strongly opposed by the entrepreneurs), but by a flexible use of the monetary policy and external loans, which soon created inflationary pressures that along with the populist tone and the acquisition of industries by the government, (some of them via nationalisation), scared the entrepreneurs, who then started to talk about "a crisis of confidence" between them and the public sector. The episode ended up with the infamous "financial *coup d'Etat*" when immense sums of money were transferred from Mexico to foreign banks,⁹ followed by an external debt that rose dramatically from US \$ 3,999 billion in 1970 to US \$ 19,000 billion in 1976.¹⁰

As for the political strategy, pompously called "Democratic Openness", it was designed for creating wider spaces for political participation, especially for the middle classes (the main participants in the 1968 student mobilisations) who demanded more spaces for participation and the securing of political tolerance. In the words of Meyer and Aguilar Camín, the "Democratic Openness" was,

...most of all, an argument to re-affirm the institutional and ideological legitimacy of the Mexican State that had been eroded by the 1968 political crisis... It was the answer to the need of "updating" to preserve what was thought should be preserved... The renovation of the ideological legitimacy mechanisms was an important aspect of this change in tune...¹¹

The "Democratic Openness" conceded more freedom to intellectual criticism and to the *printed* media; it also tried to grant political tolerance to left-wing groups, to approach the university students, and it became the basis from which independent union movements (outside the official party and the traditional corporatist networks) were supported by the administration itself. This strategy was intended to diminish the accumulated political

Rosemary Thorp and Lawrence Whitehead, *Inflation and Stabilization in Latin America*, London, McMillan, 1979, p.45).

⁹ The idea of a "crisis of confidence" is very important since it implies the entrepreneurial complaint against any possible loss of their privileges (basically to always be consulted before any important decision of economic policy) and the predictability in its economic activities. The entrepreneurs saw as a dangerous challenge the State's economic expansion and the deepening of its populist and nationalist rhetoric. For an analysis of the conflict between the State and the entrepreneur see: Rogelio Hernández Rodríguez, *Empresarios, banca y Estado, el conflicto durante el gobierno de José López Portillo, 1976-1982*, Mexico City: Miguel Ángel Porrúa and FLACSO, 1988; Carlos Arriola and Juan Gustavo Galindo, "Los empresarios y el Estado en México (1976-1982)", in *Foro Internacional*, vol.XXV, no.2, October-December 1984; Luna Ledesma, (1992).

¹⁰ For an analysis of the 1970-76 economic project and its failure see Carlos Tello Macías, *La política económica en México, 1970-1976*, México City, Siglo XXI, 1979.

pressures by meeting the political demands of sectors that were developing outside the traditional corporatist channels.

As an important element of the political strategy of Echeverría, in 1973 an electoral reform was passed reducing the voting age from 21 to 18 years of age and the age for being voted deputy or senator to 21 and 25 years of age respectively. It also reduced the minimum percentage of national voting for parties to enter into Congress from 2.5 to 1.5 percent. Also for the first time, parties were legally enabled, though only during electoral times, to use radio and TV spaces for transmitting their messages (see Chapters Four and Five). Nevertheless, this reform did not provide opposition parties with any real possibility for challenging the actual political regime. It was mainly a strategy to re-enforce the regime's legitimacy before certain sectors and a mechanism for preventing opposition parties from disappearing completely from the political landscape, thus maintaining the minimum democratic formalities. But in spite of its limits, it is important to notice that it was the first reform that defined the electoral arena as the place in which to express and channel dissidence, an aspect that would be broadened by the Reform of 1977 during the administration of José López Portillo (1976-1982).

With the discovery of important oil reserves and the sudden wealth it brought, the economic project of the López Portillo government balanced upon the maintenance of a high rate of public investment with funds coming from external loans in the hope of future oil exports. Between 1977 and 1980 the economy grew at rates near 7.5 percent a year, and this gave the regime enough confidence to carry out a more comprehensive political liberalisation reform whose intention was to widen the spaces for participation—especially for the left in order to maintain it within the institutional channels—and to grant more balanced, though minimal, conditions for opposition parties to survive and secure their presence in Congress.

The Reform of 1977 favoured the creation and registration of opposition parties more than any previous reform in Mexico. Three new parties obtained their registration for competing immediately in the 1979 mid-term elections.¹² In the usually obscure words of President

¹¹ Aguilar Camín and Lorenzo Meyer, (1991), p.247.

¹² The Democratic Mexican Party, PDM, the Socialist Workers' Party, PST, and the Mexican Communist Party, PCM. Under this same law two other parties competed in the 1982 general elections, the Social Democratic Party and the Revolutionary Workers' Party.

López Portillo, the aim of the reform was to “improve democratic institutions in order to allow minorities to be represented according to their numbers [and to grant that] their ‘ways of thinking’ (*modos de pensar*) can be considered in the decision-making by the majorities”.¹³ There are two important features that must be stressed here. Firstly, the aim of the reform was to open a space for the “minorities” who developed outside traditional corporatist structures –basically urban middle classes—, since for the government it remained obvious that the “majorities” were still represented within the official party.¹⁴ Secondly, more facilities were given for organising and preserving political parties. Article 41 of the Constitution was reformed and, for the first time, it defined the political parties as “entities for the national interest” whose main activity is “to promote the people’s participation in democratic life”, something that was not recognised in any previous legislation. The main points of the 1977 reform were:

- To make more flexible the procedures for the registration of new political parties. While keeping the possibility that parties could maintain their registration with only 1.5 percent in any national election, it recognised as well the figure of “political associations” (as opposed to political parties), and it allowed party alliances for specific elections. Also, the procedure of party registration was to be carried out in the newly created Federal Electoral Commission –dependent still on the Executive power— instead of in the Ministry of the Interior. Nevertheless, the president of the Commission was the Secretary of *Gobernación*. This Commission was in charge of the organisation and vigilance of the electoral processes.
- To grant a larger amount of material and economic benefits to the parties. Even conditionally registered parties –i.e. parties which have recently been created and had won for the first time more than 1.5 percent of the national voting—could be represented in the Federal Electoral Commission and state and district electoral committees. The Federal Electoral Commission granted also material support and financial assistance to the parties for their various campaign activities. Also, the parties

¹³ Cited in Rafael Loyola Díaz and Samuel León González, “El Partido Revolucionario Institucional: los intentos de cambio”, in Jorge Alonso, Alberto Aziz and Jaime Tamayo (comps.), *El nuevo Estado mexicano. II. Estado y política*, Mexico City, Ed. Nueva Imagen, 1992, p.55.

¹⁴ López Portillo underlined in a discourse addressed to the Popular Sector of the PRI that “the most important challenge that democracy faces in Mexico is precisely the institutional incorporation of the middle classes” (López Cámara, 1988, p.50).

were granted permanent regular access to the electronic media (not limited to electoral periods, like the 1973 reform) and support from the Federal Electoral Commission for publications.

- To raise the number of deputies in the Federal Chamber of Deputies. One hundred deputy seats were added to the already existing 300 coming from an equal number of electoral districts. A new proportional law was passed establishing that opposition parties had the exclusive right to compete for these 100 seats. In this way, there remained three hundred districts whose deputies were elected by a simple majority vote and in which all parties could compete, and one hundred deputy seats to be distributed among the opposition parties by proportional representation law.

Perhaps the two most important consequences of the Reform of 1977 were the definitive establishment of the electoral arena as the most important legitimate channel of protest for non-incorporated sectors—the “urban minorities” when compared to peasants and workers affiliated to the PRI. And the fact that the Reform of 1977 was not intended—as all previous electoral reforms—to help weak opposition parties to survive in the political arena (whose survival has been crucial for the PRI in order not to lead a single-party system and to maintain the least “democratic formalities”), but was meant to recognise the existence of real, though weak, opposition forces that were claiming spaces for participation and representation. While the regime maintained the ultimate control over political life, the Reform of 1977 was to transform Mexican political life by showing the spaces where political pluralism could find a place: the electoral arena. This openness was the first true step of the political liberalisation process. Ever since—and this must be emphasised—it was in the electoral arena, and in the debates on further electoral reforms, where the confrontation between the regime and opposition took place.

By the end of the 1970s, the sustained economic growth and development that characterised Mexican life during the previous thirty years produced little pressure for democratisation. As said before, such pressure came mainly from the middle sectors; sectors that had not been part of the historical corporatist structures, but whose demands could be channelled through the electoral arena and the party system. In any case, by the late 1970s, the parties—other than the PRI—were weak and, including the PAN, all opposition parties had a low

level of penetration and “representativity” in the society. This situation reflected also the lack of pressure “from below” to open the regime and favoured a kind of protracted transition in which the electoral arena became the crucial space for negotiating and in which the parties, which were originally weak structures, had more incentives to play within the regime’s rules than openly challenging it.¹⁵

At the end of the 1970s, with an apparently successful economic performance (created by the oil exports), the support of the entrepreneurs and the effective subordination and control of popular sectors, the regime decided to implement this political reform to better incorporate into the institutional game potentially adversary groups in the electoral arena believing that the economic growth would diminish any risk for uncontrolled protests. As long as the economy marched on well and there was a large public investment, the opening of the electoral arena did not show its hidden potentialities for channelling the vote into opposition. But problems were lying immediately ahead for the old structures.

By mid-1981, the economic strategy, almost exclusively based on oil exports showed its limits. Oil prices fell disastrously low, leaving the country with an external debt near to US \$ 85 billion and the gravest capital-flight ever. Protectionism and subsidies could not be sustained any longer and the State was unable to continue with re-distribution policies, which directly questioned its historical support for the popular sectors. During the next year, the constant devaluation of the Peso surpassed 150 percent and inflation rates became almost uncontrollable. In the midst of the economic chaos the government took a controversial measure: it decided to intervene in the banking system by expropriating it from private bankers in September 1982. For the government, the measure was intended to counterbalance financial instability; instead, for the private sector it was the culmination of irresponsible populism (which they had gladly supported as long as they were benefited). In any case the populist and nationalist components of the post-revolutionary discourse lost its significance after the crisis. By 1982, the end of López Portillo’s term the regime found itself with a very reduced capacity to cope with its revolutionary social and economic goals and with larger spaces conceded to society for political participation through the electoral arena. In this sense, if the Reform of 1977 was the inauguration of a liberalisation process because it supposed a controlled change in the political rules, after 1982 it started to

¹⁵ At the end of this period, the emergence of the PRD shows that another position was possible: that of

generate unintentional consequences that resulted from *the combination of its potentialities within a context of deep economic crisis*.

The crisis obliged the new government of Miguel De la Madrid (1983-1988) to design a new economic strategy to control the growing inflation and, if possible, to reactivate growth. A comprehensive economic liberalisation programme was launched in 1984, but its implementation brought a crucial political consequence: it forced the regime to abandon its two essential pillars of historic legitimacy: the re-distributive role of the State (and its role as the most important economic actor, as well) and its populist-nationalist discourse.¹⁶

The "economic realism", as De la Madrid defined the new project, proved to imply restrictive economic policies that excluded the popular sectors, since the old socio-economic benefits and the social budget at large were dramatically reduced, altering, in turn, the regime's relations with the corporatist structures. The government announced a comprehensive privatisation programme of public firms, the reduction of social investment and a decrease on basic supplies' subsidies. All of these new policies meant the complete reform of the popular revolutionary pact and affected the loyalty and support of the masses to the regime.¹⁷ The ruling elite adopted the Neo-liberal arguments that the European Right and the American Republicans used against the Welfare-State models to criticise the "populist irresponsible past" in Mexico. The effect of such dramatic changes in the policies and in the discourse was the renewed support of the majority of the business groups, but at the same time the restriction of resources for re-distribution greatly eroded the regime's links with the corporatist structures.¹⁸

continuos confrontation. This is possible because of relatively stronger political party structures.

¹⁶ The birth of the Modern State in Mexico was seen as an outcome of the Revolution, whose natural heirs conformed a ruling elite within an official party. The regime monopolised of all the flags of progressivism, populism and nationalism derived from the Revolution discrediting all political opposition who sought legitimacy under such principles (Manuel Alejandro Guerrero, *Estado y legitimidad en México*, B.A. Thesis in International Relations, Mexico City, El Colegio de México, 1995, p.29). The revolutionary origins and the popular-inclusive character of the regime were translated into two essential and inter-related elements of political and socio-economic consensus, which explain for the high level of stability of the Mexican political system and of its political legitimacy. On the one hand, a nationalist and populist political discourse which incarnated the "ideology of the Revolution", and on the other, the active role of the State as the main promoter of economic development and as distributor of social benefits for diverse sectors and groups. The project of ideological and socio-economic integration supported the political stability and this, in turn, reciprocated backing up the socio-economic project directed by the State in conformity to its nationalist and populist discourse.

¹⁷ Sergio Zermeno, "El fin del populismo mexicano", in *Nexos*, no.113, May, Mexico City 1987, p.31.

¹⁸ José Antonio Crespo, "Crisis económica; crisis de legitimidad", in Carlos Bazdresch, *et.al.* (comps.), *México: auge, crisis y ajuste*, vol.1, *Los tiempos del cambio, 1982-1988*, Mexico City, F.C.E., 1992, p.28.

The new orientation of the development model –towards a competitive unregulated market and the liberalisation of the economy—led to the abandonment of the old schemes of corporatist relations that the Mexican regime had been building during the previous decades. In this way, the deterioration of corporatism is not only explained by a lack of resources to continue with re-distributive and traditional exchange policies, but by the introduction of a new economic model –based on efficiency criteria, market competition, de-regulation and participation in the external commercial and technological trade—which resulted in being inherently incompatible with the traditional corporatist structure at all levels. Mexican corporatism acted as a good representation for the vices of the past: inefficiency, corruption, bureaucratism, accompanied by a large State networks of subsidies, compensations, and diverse social and economic benefits. The new economic policies meant in practice precisely the dismantling of such network and, therefore, they also meant substantial decreases in social and economic compensations for social groups.

Since 1984 the net social effects of the economic stabilisation and liberalisation policies has been negative.¹⁹ Along with the deterioration of social indicators, according to some specialists, from 1984 to 1992 income inequality dramatically polarised: dividing the population in ten groups according by their income share, we have that in 1984 the two lowest groups of the population shared respectively 1.60 and 2.89 percent of the total income, while the highest ten percent of the population owned 36.13 percent. By 1992, those two poorer groups of the people shared 1.30 and 2.35 respectively of the total income, while the upper ten percent concentrated 42.06 percent of the income shares.²⁰ The rise in the income share of the richest tenth percent of the population was not only gained at the expense of the lower strata, but also of the middle class, whose income –if we sum up the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th tenths of the population—decreased from 39.07 percent in 1984 to 34.97 percent in 1992.²¹ At the same time, there began a process of erosion of previous social and economic benefits: a serious loss of the purchasing capacity of real minimum

¹⁹ See the detailed account on this topic in Humberto Pánuco Laguete and Miguel Székely, "Income distribution and poverty in Mexico" in Victor Bulmer Thomas (ed.), *The New Economic Model and its Impact on Income Distribution and Poverty*, N.Y., San Martin's Press, 1996.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

wages (which decreased in real terms in 51.7 percent between 1982 and 1988), a weakening in the unions capacity to negotiate labour contracts, and a dramatic rise in unemployment.²² For its affiliates the benefits of corporatism vanished, but the costs rose instead, since the corporatist structure was maintained, but it progressively lost its logic as an exchange mechanism, preserving only its logic as a control mechanism. The discipline of the *Priista* corporatist bases was required more than ever in an electoral arena that was becoming more competitive and problematic for the regime. Also, the workers and peasant organisations affiliated to the PRI were compelled to accept the losses and drawbacks that resulted from the liberalisation policies as if they were "great revolutionary gains" —the workers' and peasants' leadership had no option but to promote them in such terms to the rank-and file, losing ever more credibility and support. The affiliated popular sectors, peasants and workers, were helpless in facing this new situation, since they had always been dependent on the State and lacked —or were prevented from developing—a capacity to organise autonomously.²³ Corporatism was seriously damaged as a demand intermediation mechanism.²⁴ It was precisely after these moments of deep crisis, and not during the former decades of growth and stability, when the strongest pressures for opening the political regime initiated.

The Emergence of Political Pluralism

Covered up by the minimum formalistic —though not substantive—requisites of democracy, the Mexican post-revolutionary regime's legitimacy was founded upon its capacity to include the most diverse social sectors into the benefits of economic prosperity and

²² Graciela Bensusan, "Instituciones en crisis: el mundo del trabajo en transformación", in G. Bensusan and Carlos García, *Estado y sindicatos, crisis de una relación*, Mexico City, Metropolitan Autonomous University-Xochimilco and Friederich Ebert Stiftung, 1989, p.48.

²³ Soledad Loaeza, "Delamadridismo, la segunda modernización", in Bazdresch, *et.al.* (1992), p.65. However it must be mentioned that by the end of the 1980s some working groups and unions became very important. They were basically the ones that had been growing outside of the traditional corporatist model inserted within the PRI and also the ones that had organised within new industries and highly technological sectors, like telecommunications. The best example of this new kind of independent unionism is the Telephone Workers Union, whose leader Francisco Hernández Juárez, claimed its independence from the Labour Congress (*Congreso del Trabajo*), which is an organ basically obedient to the Working Sector of the PRI.

²⁴ Lorenzo Meyer, "El corporativismo mexicano en tiempos del neoliberalismo", in Bensusan and García, (1989), pgs.27-29.

development, no matter how unequally distributed they were. The crisis questioned precisely such capacity, and after the political reforms of the 1970s—especially the Political Reform of 1977—that promoted a political liberalisation based upon the strengthening of the parties (and, to a lesser extent, upon the emergence of independent unions), there began the creation of the mechanisms through which different social sectors could channel their political protests against the regime: the electoral arena. It is highly noticeable that the discontents against the regime were only very seldom channelled through extra-parliamentarian or anti-institutional ways, like the emergence of guerrillas or other movements, during the 1980s, the gravest moments of the economic crisis.

The political participation of the population was channelled through the incipient opposition parties.²⁵ And this mobilisation, especially that of the urban middle sectors, against the PRI could be seen as a complaint against the failures of a regime that jeopardised their expectations of economic improvement and social mobility. At first, more than a conscious vote for opposition, the vote of these sectors could be better defined as a “punishment vote” against the PRI. A vote primarily intended to express unconformity and protest against the regime’s performance in the social and economic spheres, more so than a conscious vote linked to opposition parties’ loyalties. The PAN was the party that became the largest beneficiary of such vote. Its discourse, praising honesty, de-centralisation, priority of local interests, anti-corruption, and local life, became very attractive for urban groups for whom the traditional populist and nationalist discourse of the ruling elite had ultimately brought about corruption, lack of efficiency, excessive bureaucracy and centralisation. The party also became a receptive organisation for an important number of small and medium size entrepreneurs—called *neopanistas*, due to their recent entrance into party politics and due to their more pragmatic vision of politics, less attached to the more traditional values of the PAN.

In 1983 in the midst of important citizens’ demonstrations in some Northern cities against electoral fraud, important local elections were won by the opposition in such an overwhelming manner that the regime felt compelled for the first time to recognise these victories. The PAN won in five state capitals, Chihuahua, Durango, San Luis Potosí,

²⁵ Though the PAN was founded in 1939, it never had a true chance to defeat the PRI in elections until the early 1980s, when the party became the recipient of the political unconformity against the PRI and its governments’ failures.

Hermosillo and Guanajuato (in coalition with the PDM), and in a major city on the border with the USA (Ciudad Juárez). These first victories for the opposition occurred in the Northern states –more urban regions, with richer and better educated population.

Though in general terms, as Table 3.2 shows, the presence of opposition parties in Congress during the first half of the 1980s remained scarce (the election of 1979 is included since it was the first one after the 1977 reform), the unprecedented depth of the 1982 crisis and the following drastic economic measures taken by the De la Madrid government fuelled electoral opposition and eventually strengthened the traditionally weak opposition parties. For instance, the PAN during the 1980s was able to expand its clientele to other social sectors outside its traditional voting groups (urban middle classes) and started to consolidate wider bases of loyal and constant supporters.²⁶ In this way, gradually during the 1980s there appeared an important political feature that marked a deep change with the past: the electoral processes started to express the political preference of the population, after having been mostly a plebiscitarian mechanism of the ruling PRI for decades.

Table 3.2
Federal Deputies by Party, 1979-1985

Party	1979 Elections		1982 Elections		1985 Elections	
	Majority Deputies	PR Deputies	Majority Deputies	PR Deputies	Majority Deputies	PR Deputies
PRI	296	--	299	--	289	--
PAN	4	38	1	50	6	32
PSUM	--	--	--	17	--	12
PDM	--	10	--	12	--	12
PPS	--	12	--	10	--	11
PST	--	10	--	11	--	11
PCM	--	18	--	--	--	--
PSD	--	--	--	--	--	--
PRT	--	--	--	--	--	6
PARM*	--	12	--	--	2	10

²⁶ Soledad Loaeza, "El Partido Acción Nacional: de la oposición leal a la impaciencia electoral", in Soledad Loaeza and Rafael Segovia (comps.), *La vida política mexicana en la crisis*, 25th Anniversary of the Centre of International Studies, Mexico City, El Colegio de México, 1987, pgs.77-78.

PMT	--	--	--	--	--	6
-----	----	----	----	----	----	---

* In 1982 this party lost its legal recognition since it did not reach the minimum 1.5 percentage of votes at a national level. In 1984 the party obtained again a conditional registration from the Federal Electoral Commission.

Sources: Elaborated with data from the following documents: For PR Deputies to the LI Legislature: Manuel González Oropeza, *Los diputados de la Nación*, volume III, Federal Chamber of Deputies and Secretaría de Gobernación. For Majority Deputies to the same Legislature: *Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, Electoral College, LI Legislatura, year I, volume I, no. 1, August 15th 1979, p.8. For PR Deputies to the LII Legislature: *Directorio de los diputados de la LII Legislatura, 1982-1985*, Mexico City, Federal Chamber of Deputies, 1985. For Majority Deputies of the same Legislature: *Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados*, Electoral College, LII Legislatura, year I, volume I, no. 1, August 1988. For PR and Majority Deputies to the LIII Legislature: *Directorio de los diputados de la LIII Legislatura, 1985-1988*, Mexico City, Federal Chamber of Deputies, 1988.

Though the government recognised these first victories, it soon realised that the electoral arena could rapidly become a real area for disputing power, a challenge that the PRI was not willing to tolerate.²⁷ The reaction was to not accept any further important electoral defeats, and therefore to manipulate the electoral results if necessary.²⁸ This attitude became commonly known as “the patriotic frauds”. In 1986 the PRI recovered control over Chihuahua through very dubious means, since the results did not correspond to the demographic composition of that state. With an electoral participation above sixty percent, despite the fact that seventy percent of its population was urban, the official party’s victory in Chihuahua was based on the rural voting.²⁹

Coincident with the spirit of the “patriotic fraud”, there then passed in Congress the new electoral reforms in 1986 and 1987, whose aim was this time to make the PRI more competitive by increasing electoral dissidence. Three important reforms were added in 1986 to Article 54 of the Constitution, which deals with the electoral system. Firstly, the number of seats in the Chamber of Deputies was increased from four hundred to five hundred deputies. The additional one hundred deputies were to be elected by means of proportional representation rule (PR), and in this manner there were to be three hundred single majority elected deputies (elected from the same number of districts) and two hundred additional deputies elected by PR rule. Within this change, it was established that

²⁷ A famous phrase of Fidel Velázquez, the leader of the Congreso del Trabajo, the largest umbrella workers organisation in the PRI, resumes this “spirit”: “We arrived to power by means of guns and bullets and only by means of guns and bullets are they going to throw us out” (“Llegamos al poder a punta de balazos y sólo a balazos nos sacarán”).

²⁸ Juan Molinar, “La asfixia electoral”, *Nexos*, no. 123, March, Mexico City 1988.

²⁹ For a detailed account on this electoral process see Juan Molinar, “Regreso a Chihuahua”, *Nexos*, no. 111, March, Mexico City 1987.

all the parties, including PRI, were allowed to compete for the PR deputy seats (something that was previously reserved for opposition parties only by the Reform of 1977). Secondly, the minimum national voting percentage for obtaining PR seats in the Lower Chamber was fixed at 1.5 percent. Thirdly, it saw the introduction of what was called a “governance clause” (*cláusula de gobernabilidad*), which established two conditions for obtaining the absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies. Firstly, if no party could obtain the absolute majority (251 deputy seats), the largest minority party would automatically receive as many deputies as required from its PR lists in order to reach such absolute majority. In this way, the largest party would always get at least 251 deputies. Secondly, the party that reached 51 percent or more of the national voting without obtaining the majority of seats, would receive as many deputies as required from its PR list in order to have the absolute majority of deputies. As a minor compensation, it was agreed that no party could obtain more than a total of 350 deputies, even if that party reached a higher percentage of votes.³⁰ With these changes the regime was preparing itself to face the 1988 general elections.

During the early and mid-1980s the political mobilisation was essentially conducted by a renewed activism of the middle classes whose challenge —essentially electoral and institutional—to the regime was not equalled by any other social group. In the case of the popular sectors, though there were also some popular demonstrations against the economic policy, the cost of life or the defence of social policy, these never turned into a sustained challenge for the regime. However, the major electoral challenge was not going to come from the PAN in 1988, but from a nationalist coalition gathered around former *Priista* politicians who opposed the abandonment of the “revolutionary” ideology and the old economic project. The economic reforms launched by the De la Madrid’s administration required a stricter, highly disciplined and quite homogeneous cabinet since at the bottom of such policies was the dismantling of the post-revolutionary project and the affecting of a large number of interests.³¹ The political group gathered around the president, transplanted mostly from the financial and economic sectors of the administration, decided to impose their particular project without resorting to the traditional elite negotiation processes; this

³⁰ Secretaría de Gobernación, *Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, Mexico City, Segob, December 1996, p.200.

³¹ See: Rogelio Hernández Rodríguez, “Los hombres del presidente De la Madrid”, in *Foro Internacional*, vol.28 no.1, July-September 1987.

time “the winners would take everything”, thus violating one of the most important internal non-written rules of the PRI political cohesion and permanence. Moreover, since the success of such policies depended also on the continuity of power of such a group, for the first time in decades, the presidential successor was to be someone from the same particular homogeneous political group. The homogeneity and continuity of the new ruling elite clearly showed the abandonment of the old plural inter-elite coalitions. The concentration of political power in the hands of a relatively single-minded technocratic group also caused the subordination of the other political groups without the possibility of obtaining the exchanges of the past that were crucial for maintaining the unity, discipline and relative coherence of the “revolutionary family” for decades. This abandonment of a model of State within which diverse interests could be accommodated and find concrete benefits, became intolerable for other political groups.

A major rupture among the political elite occurred in 1987 that eventually accelerated the progressive transformation of the electoral arena as a space in which the political elite started to compete for power: the emergence of an articulate left-wing coalition that based its discourse on the nationalist and social justice principles of the Mexican revolution. If in 1946 and 1952 there were also important divisions among the “revolutionary family” and some political groups backed the dissenters, the 1988 elite disagreement was different in nature since it proved to be more consistent and outlived the mere electoral moment (something the *Almazanismo* of 1940, the *Padillismo* of 1946 and the *Henriquismo* of 1952 never did). The main reasons for this achievement were that, along with to the backup from other political groups—as previous rupturing movements also had—the 1988 coalition was successful in generating authentic social support mostly from popular urban sectors.

The general elections of 1988 saw three large organisations in competition: the PRI, the PAN and the recently created National Democratic Front (FDN) which was a mix of PRI defectors—renegades of the nationalist and “revolutionary” sectors of the official party, including some notable figures like Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz-Ledo—and various former left-wing organisation militants (including ex-members of the Mexican Communist Party). This coalition became in 1989 the basis of the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD).

In many ways, the FDN, with its discourse based on social justice, promised a restoration of the old "true" ideals of the Mexican revolution, becoming thus a sort of modern replicate of the old PRM—the official party during the times of President Lázaro Cárdenas in the 1930s. Its inclusive social discourse, the prestige of its presidential candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (the son of the fondly remembered president Cárdenas), and the general dissatisfaction with the social and economic situation, which turned many popular organisations and unions (including formally *Priista* ones, like the Oil Workers Union) to support the FDN, made of this coalition a formidable challenge for the PRI. Therefore, the competition among the parties was by the late 1980s being backed by wide social sectors.

The elections of 1988 saw much competition, then, but the conditions of such competition were highly unequal and excessively unfair, since all the regime's apparatus backed up the official party's candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari. In spite of such support, the PRI presidential candidate officially obtained for the first time a percentage of votes that minimally surpassed 50 percent of the total electoral result (51.7 percent), and actually his victory was surrounded by a widespread suspicion of fraud. According to official figures, the FDN and the PAN obtained 31 percent and 17 percent respectively.³²

Nevertheless, the 1988 electoral process introduced crucial changes to the national political life. For instance, for the first time the widespread popular support for opposition candidates was recognised, and electoral races were accepted as being lost in some major cities, like Mérida and San Luis Potosí. Also for the first time, though opposition federal deputies did not obtain the majority in Congress, negotiations would be needed for passing any constitutional reform, which required two thirds of the chamber (Table 3.3). The PRI received 265 deputies for the LIV Legislative Period, which the lowest number obtained so far. In the Upper Chamber there were found four opposition party's Senators, who broke

³² Actually it became impossible to know the exact results of the 1988 electoral process partly because more than 24 thousand electoral ballots (which comprised of 45 percent of them) were never checked. The Legislative Power, which according to the law was in charge of qualifying the election—and was dominated by the PRI—never approved of the opening of those ballots. According to the research of Alberto Aziz Nassif and Juan Molinar, even without those ballots one can conclude that in 1988 a massive fraud was orchestrated in eight states that are composed by 58 municipalities. And there were even some cases in which the vote for the official party was 100 percent of the electorate, like in Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero, Veracruz, Puebla, Yucatán, Nuevo León and Sinaloa (Alberto Aziz Nassif y Juan Molinar Horcasitas, "Los resultados electorales", in Pablo González Casanova (coord.), *Segundo informe sobre la democracia. México el 6 de julio de 1988*, Mexico City, Siglo XXI, 1990, p. 170).

for the first time the real and complete monopoly that the PRI had enjoyed in that chamber for 59 years.³³

Table 3.3
Composition of the Chamber of Deputies in Congress by Opposition Parties during the LIV Legislative Period (1988-1991)

Party	Number of Deputies	Majority Deputies	Percentage	PR Deputies	Percentage
PAN	101	37	36.6	64	63.4
PPS	31	4	12.9	27	87.1
PFCRN*	28	5	17.8	23	82.2
CD**	26	15	57.7	11	42.3
PARM	28	5	17.8	23	82.2
PMS	18	0	0	18	100
Independents	3	0	0	3	100

*Partido del Frente Cardenista de Reconstrucción Nacional

**Corriente Democrática (which was to become the core of the PRD)

Source: *Directorio de la LIV Legislatura de la Cámara de Diputados*.

The elections of 1988 made clear that the emergence of political mobilisation in large scale was not –and could not be–encompassed and controlled through the traditional corporatist means. Moreover, the most permanent trend of 1988 showed that the electoral processes were increasingly substituting the corporatist model as a mechanism for channelling demands and for political interest intermediation. At the same time, the active support of social groups for opposition parties was replacing the old ritualistic plebiscitarian electoral mechanism by a process in which the support of the citizens was gaining importance. These were crucial changes that were to transform definitively Mexican political life.

The new elected president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-1994), realised this and tried to regenerate the image of the regime –and especially his own image, due to the strong suspicions of fraud involved in the elections' results—and strengthen the presidential figure against other political groups and figures inside and outside the regime. President Salinas crafted a strategy directed at recovering the support of the popular sectors (especially urban

³³ During the administration of López Portillo one Senator entered from the Popular Socialist Party to the Upper House, but his posting was the result of a negotiation between the PRI and the PPS in which the former party maintained all the election charges in the State of Oaxaca (where in some districts the PPS had particular importance). In exchange, the PRI offered the president of the PPS, Jorge Cruickshank García, a seat in the Senate House.

popular sectors) and to increasing the back-up that his predecessor received from the entrepreneurs. The popularity of the Salinas' administration needed to increase, but he also required the re-establishment of party discipline. This attitude of Salinas became evident through some quite telling incidents: the leader of the Oil Workers Union, Joaquín Hernández Galicia —who had supported Cuauhtémoc's candidacy—was arrested and imprisoned under the charge of corruption; shortly afterwards it was the turn of another symbol of the traditional unionism, Jongitud Barrios, the leader of the powerful Teacher's Union, a key organisation within the Popular Sector of the PRI. If such lessons were enough to re-establish discipline among the regime's political groups, Salinas turned then to punish a prominent member of the economic elite, the banker Agustín Legorreta, sending a clear warning to the entrepreneurial groups. It must be said that these actions, which were strongly publicised in the media, proved very popular, since they were promoted by the government as concrete measures against corruption and nepotism.

On the economic front, Salinas carried further the liberalisation policies inaugurated by his predecessor. The economy was completely oriented towards an export-led model in which foreign capital was to play a crucial role as major investor. Economic liberalisation strategies were developed and they included extensive privatising policies,³⁴ de-regulation of capital markets policies, and the cancellation of most subsidies and aides to the medium and small firms (though the policy of fixing the salaries negotiated through a series of economic pacts benefited the entrepreneurs). Though corporatism was seriously eroded it did not disappear, but in the new economic situation popular organisations lost any possibility of negotiating for social and economic benefits from their position within the official party —as they traditionally did—, keeping only the relative strength of their positions within the wider context of production.³⁵

To compensate for the social costs of the economic adjustment and for recovering the support of previous FDN voters, there a social policy compensation programme was introduced, the National Solidarity Programme (Pronasol), and was destined to help

³⁴ In 1982 there were 1,155 public sector firms, by the end of 1993 there were only 258 (48 of which were to be either privatised or closed down). Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público y Secretaría de la Contraloría General de la Federación, *Desincorporación de entidades paraestatales*, Mexico City, F.C.E., 1994, p.57.

³⁵ Graciela Bensusan Areus and Gerardo Zamora Fernández de Lara: "Política laboral y proyecto de gobierno", in Manuel Canto Chac and Víctor Durand Ponte (coords.), *Política y gobierno en la transición mexicana*, Mexico City, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, 1990, pgs. 83-115.

alleviate extreme poverty. Almost one tenth of the social budget was allocated to this programme, which became extensively announced on radio and television. The continuous publicity on Pronasol, plus the fact that it was efficient in channelling resources to certain popular sectors who were "politically organisable" increased the popularity of the President. This reflected on the electoral arena with the sound victory of the PRI in the mid-term elections of 1991 (Table 3.4) and other electoral processes between 1990 and 1992. An example of the latter was the community of Chalco, in the State of Mexico, which in 1988 voted massively for Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas. This community received wide Pronasol investments and in the 1990 local elections handed the support back to the PRI.³⁶

For the Elections of 1991 new reforms were passed in Congress, but this time with the support of the PAN, since the PRI alone did not have the required number of deputies (2/3 of the total) to approve by itself a constitutional reform. The aim of the government was clear: to strengthen the PRI in Congress in the next intermediate elections of 1991. The regime could not take the chance of facing an electoral process in which opposition could improve the gains of 1988. Therefore, it passed a new reform in 1989 that added the following conditions that "amended" the "governance clause" as follows: the party that obtained the largest number of simple majority deputies and 35 percent of the national voting, received a sufficient number of deputies in the Chamber in order to reach 251 seats. Moreover, to that absolute majority of deputies, that party will receive two more deputies from its PR list for each percentage point obtained from the national voting, unless that party obtained since the beginning more than 75 percent of the voting.³⁷ In this manner, the government wanted to be sure that even in the case of receiving a lower voting than in 1988, the PRI could still maintain the majority in the Chamber of Deputies.

In the elections of 1991 the PRI was successful in recovering the control over the Congress by obtaining 320 deputies. The electoral recovery of the PRI was, in fact, the outcome of

³⁶ This does not mean that in the rest of the State of Mexico there had not been any irregular and fraudulent behaviour. According to the results of that electoral process (held on November 11th 1990), the PRI won with 58.6 percent, while the PAN decreased by 52 percent from what it had obtained in 1988. The demand was made for the cancellation of results in many districts by opposition parties who accused to government of previously filling the ballots, of carrying over non-registered voters through diverse districts, to illegally using public resources, and the like. However, as Lorenzo Meyer notes, maybe the most important means through which the PRI imposed in those elections was the return of the political apathy and lack of participation, since abstention raised up to 69 percent of the electorate (Lorenzo Meyer, "El limite neoliberal", in *Nexos*, no. 163, July, Mexico City 1991).

the renewed strength of the presidency, who served from the State apparatus to support the party. In 1991 it was clear that though the corporatist structure was seriously eroded, the PRI was still quite an amazing electoral machine capable of channelling popular participation.

Table 3.4
Composition of the Chamber of Deputies by Opposition Parties during the LV
Legislative Period (1991-1994)

Party	Number of Deputies	Majority Deputies	Percentage	PR Deputies	Percentage
PAN	89	10	11.2	79	88.8
PRD	41	0	0	41	100
PPS	12	0	0	12	100
PARM	15	0	0	15	100
PFCRN	23	0	0	23	100

Source: *Directorio de la LV Legislatura de la Cámara de Diputados.*

The positive image of the president was shared both by large sections of the middle classes for whom the project of Salinas promised a constant improvement in their living-standards and a renewed consumption capacity,³⁸ and by upper social sectors, since many of them were directly profiting from the privatisation policies, the economic liberalisation and the optimistic perspectives implied in the possibility of a free trade agreement with the U.S. and Canada. In numbers, the macro-economic results of the Salinas administration were promising:³⁹

- An average growth of around 5.6 percent (compared with the stagnation of the economy during the De la Madrid period).
- An inflation rate of 7.1 percent in 1994 (as compared to the 80.8 percent in 1983).
- An extremely low fiscal deficit of 0.3 percent of the GDP in 1994 (as compared to the 13.6 percent of 1984).

³⁷ *Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales*, in *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, Wednesday, August 15th 1990, p.6.

³⁸ A huge number of American-style shopping malls and American branches of supermarket chains were inaugurated during his term, helping to consolidate the "mall and supermarket" culture of consumption among the urban middle sectors.

³⁹ Mauricio A. González Gómez, "Crisis and Economic Change in Mexico", in Susan Kaufman Purcell and Luis Rubio (eds.), *Mexico under Zedillo*, Boulder, CO., Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, p.42.

- A dramatic reduction of import permits and facilities that reduced previous bureaucratic processes.
- A positive current account in 1994 of US\$ 19.2 billion, of which US\$ 11 billion was composed of productive investments and US\$ 8.2 billion of portfolio investments. This contrasted dramatically with the situation in 1987 when foreign bank loans served to finance the current account.
- An increase of eleven times in non-oil exports since 1982.
- An highly optimistic financial situation. In 1983, real interest rates were negative and financial savings shrank 17 percent in real terms. In contrast, from 1988 to 1994 rates were positive and sufficiently attractive both to retain the savings of Mexican nationals and to attract external financial investments.

The general optimistic atmosphere of the Salinas administration was reflected on the particularly high acceptance of his administration⁴⁰ and, as said before, this helps to explain the remarkable electoral recovering of the PRI during the intermediate elections of 1991.

During the Salinas' administration, the situation of the two largest opposition parties was the following: In the case of the PAN, its modernisation project was very close to the government's ideological principles that stressed the predominance of private capital over public expenditures. Therefore, this party became a more or less a natural ally of the Salinas' modernisation project, since most of his economic policy proposals were coincident with the economic postulates that party was defending for decades, i.e. privatisation, de-regulation, reduction of public expenditures, and so forth. In Congress, the PRI and PAN fractions were passing the economic reforms proposed by the Executive. Modifications to Article 27, on the character of public and private property, and to the Electoral Law were approved by both party fractions. Salinas recognised some important victories of the PAN at both local and state level. In this sense, the PAN was the first opposition party in Mexico to which there was awarded an important electoral victory in

⁴⁰ The Mexican newspaper *Reforma* published on October 30th 1994 on its front page the results of a survey that had been carried on in the main cities of the country in which the people were asked how on a scale from one to ten do they judge the administration of President Salinas during his 6 year term. The answers were the following: Monterrey, 8.00; Puebla, 7.02; Guadalajara, 7.10; and Mexico City, 6.75. The general average was of 7.2. Additionally, the individuals were asked if they did or did not agree with the way Salinas ruled. The

1989 in the state of Baja California. Other important victories were obtained in the electoral races for the governments of Chihuahua and Guanajuato.

All this meant the PAN to be constantly criticised by the Left, especially by the PRD, for being a "collaborationist party" and "second official party". The PAN justified its actions by defending the need to pass certain laws whose relevance must be considered beyond party divisions. In practice the PAN was accepting a role given by the regime's rules—those of President Salinas—in exchange for consolidating its electoral position in different states and for bargaining with the president for the passing of all laws that were coincident with its own agenda. The *Panista* elite supposed that any direct confrontation, as was the strategy of the PRD, would perhaps be useless, and instead they opted for collaborating with Salinas in the economic sphere, but always had in return an advance of the party's political interests. With a minimalist strategy, the PAN went about consolidating positions in the political landscape: the only opposition governments in the provinces different those of the PRI were its own.

Conversely, the PRD was put under pressure from the beginning of the Salinas' term. The party was led by two former *Priista* politicians, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, whose exit from the party was partly explained by the pre-dominance of the technocratic wing of which Salinas was a prominent member. This fact placed the PRD right from the start in a difficult situation of antagonism with Salinas, whose policy towards that party was summed up in his famous phrase "I neither see them, nor listen to them". Nevertheless, the confrontations between the PRD and the government brought with them the serious reality of more than two hundred murdered *Perredista* militants. In the large majority of the cases, their deaths were never investigated. The confrontation strategy of the party made it difficult for it to reach agreements with the PAN—nominated as "collaborationist"—and thus contributed to its isolation. At the time, few practical gains were obtained by the party.

The situation of the two largest opposition parties was, thus, quite different during the Salinas administration. The PAN was benefiting with slow, but constant advances in the political map through pragmatic negotiations and bargaining with the government. The PRD was more concentrated on its own survival, and on maintaining the image of the only

answers showed that 20 percent disagreed, 43 percent agreed, and 36 agreed on some issues. In this way we

true opposition party in Mexico by developing an open confrontation with the regime. The then positive image of the Salinas administration was obscuring the fact that opposition parties were transforming and developing. As long as such an image was maintained, the political situation seemed to be under the complete control of the government.

In any case, during the 1988-1994 period both parties movements and actions were conditioned by the government's own attitudes and options, thus creating the impression of a stronger regime that had recuperated almost complete control over the political and electoral arenas. In reality these years served for strengthening the opposition parties' identities and for providing them with a political space that had never before been accessible to any other opposition party: the PAN acquired a legislative and governmental experience in Congress and the states it seldom had in the past; the PRD found ways to pressurise on the government and extend its links to other popular organisations and sectors which were also opposed to the regime, but whose political capacities to act were reduced. Thus, after the 1988 elections, the party system was transformed from being characterised by the overwhelming dominance of an official party over a constellation of weak opposition and pseudo-opposition parties, to a system in which there were three political organisations in competition, at least in certain urban regions, for power. The period after the 1988 elections saw the consolidation of a Centre-Right party, the PAN, the emergence of a Centre-Left party, the PRD (since 1989), and in the middle a complex organisation, the PRI, that, though its traditional revolutionary principles guided it to the left, its actual leadership was compromised with economic liberalisation policies that veered it to the right.

can see that, in general terms, his administration enjoyed a good deal of acceptance from the population.

Chapter Four

Television, the Renewal of Support for the Regime

This chapter discusses the relationship between the political regime and private television between the 1970s to the early 1990s, and how it affected the ways of presenting political information and material. The political liberalisation process that started in Mexico during the 1970s was not reflected on the TV screens. Moreover, it was precisely during those years when Televisa (created in 1973) became a virtual ministry of communication that presented the official version of domestic politics. In spite of some circumstantial misunderstandings with President Echeverría (1970-76) at the beginning of his term and with President López Portillo at the end of the 1970s, the period studied in this chapter shows how the information policy of Televisa expressly and decidedly supported the PRI regime at the expense of manipulating and underreporting the information related to alternative political actors and forces. This is clearly seen during the intense political mobilisation in Chihuahua in 1986, the strong electoral challenge to the regime by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in 1988 and the competed elections of 1994. In exchange for such support the regime compensated the network by providing it with all the necessary economic and technical facilities for its transformation into the strongest Spanish-content media corporation in the world.

Still in the 1970s the government's discourse was characterised by a populist and nationalist rhetoric and an apparently critical attitude towards the entrepreneurial sectors – though this was never reflected in concrete adverse policy outcomes. Though many strong entrepreneurial groups felt uncomfortable with the populist excesses of President Echeverría (that often transformed into the nationalisation of private property), for these groups there were not many other real political alternatives to turn to at the time, and most of them preferred to give their support to a regime that was still granting them a large number of benefits. During the 1980s, when opposition movements began to grow stronger and became more important, some small and medium entrepreneurs mostly in the northern cities of Mexico started to sympathise with the centre-right wing PAN. However, in the case of the most powerful entrepreneurs and the largest consortiums –among which

Televisa ranked at the top—there was no need to turn into opposition, since President De la Madrid (1982-1988) was indeed a strong promoter of their interests. Even the old nationalist and populist discourse was replaced by another more akin to entrepreneurial and market values. Therefore, despite the fact that the political liberalisation process was creating new political alternatives, for the more powerful entrepreneurs there was no need to turn towards those alternatives. They decided better to remain on the side of the government and maintain –and increase—their benefits. This was also the case of private TV, for which there was no incentive for openness especially when, with both President De la Madrid and President Salinas there was a notable coincidence of interests, as will be seen below.

-----0-----

In 1970 there were 78 television stations in operation of which the most important ones were part of the following private TV networks: Telesistema Mexicano (TM), concessionaire of Channels 2 (XEW-TV), Channel 4 (XHTV) and Channel 5 (XHGC-TV), Televisión Independiente de México (TIM), concessionaire of Channel 8 (XHTM), Corporación Mexicana de Radio y Televisión, concessionaire of Channel 13 (XHDF), and Telecadena Mexicana, with the concession to operate some regional and local TV channels in the provinces. This situation contrasted greatly with the one that had prevailed during the 1950s and almost all of the 1960s, when TM was practically the only TV network with the capacity to broadcast nation-wide. Now, the concessions given to new groups and entrepreneurs created the conditions for competition for audiences, ratings and publicity among TV networks.

TIM and TM belonged to two of the most powerful economic groups in the country, and therefore they did not hesitate in using the enormous amount of resources at their disposal to compete. Artists, producers, directors and showmen changed constantly from one corporation to the other in response to increasingly higher economic bids.¹ The corporations even bribed some of the firms that were in charge of measuring the ratings in

¹Zarur Osorio, (1996), pgs.48-49.

order to appear more attractive before the announcers.² The contents reflected this competition as well and some programmes started to rely more on scandal and vulgarity in order to keep the ratings high,³ a situation which provoked the criticism of some sectors within the government, including President Echeverría himself.

In December 1972 the merging of the two largest TV networks in Mexico, TM and TIM, into a larger consortium called *Televisión Via Satélite, S.A.* (Televisa) was announced. The creation of this new company was a direct consequence of the strong economic competition that both networks had been experiencing over the last years. Competition had been costly for both TM and TIM and since July 1972 the concessionaires presented President Echeverría with a report on the state of television underlining the strong economic difficulties that that industry was facing. Therefore, the merging of the two most important TV networks was not a surprise. Televisa was officially registered in January 8th 1973.⁴ TM owned 75 percent of the shares of the new company and TIM kept the other 25 percent. Emilio Azcárraga Milmo, the son of the founder of TM who died in September 1972, became Televisa's chairman.⁵ In a few years Televisa turned into the most important television—and multimedia—corporation in the country (and later in the Spanish speaking world) since its creation responded both to the needs of renewing the political alliances with the government and to a logic of increasing its economic benefits and diminishing competition risks. As seen in Chapter Two, after certain initial disagreements with Echeverría, the attitude of the concessionaires—especially those of Televisa—was to reinforce their loyalties to the regime and to renew, in closer terms, their compromise with the government's political interests. Their aim was to be secure that there would not be any further attempt to alter the private operation of the media. The issuing of the Rulings on the Federal Law of Radio and Television (RLFRT) of 1973 made clear the renewed, though implicit, compromise between the government and the concessionaires: the government

² Víctor Manuel Bernal Sahagún, *Anatomía de la publicidad en México. Monopolios, enajenación y desperdicio*, Mexico City, Ed. Nuestro Tiempo, 1993, p.164.

³ See: Efraín Pérez Espino, "El monopolio de la televisión comercial en México (el caso de Televisa)", in *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, Vol. XLI, no.4, October-December, 1979.

⁴ See Pérez Espino (1979). This is also confirmed by an interview to the then Vicepresident of the company, Alejandro Sada, by Laura Castellot de Ballín. In Castellot de Ballín, *Historia de la televisión en México narrada por sus protagonistas*, Mexico City, Ed. Alpe, 1993.

⁵ The Executive Vice-President was Miguel Alemán Velasco, the Corporative Vice-President was Rómulo O'Farrill Naunde and his father, the owner of the newspaper *Novedades* was the Chairman of the Management Board.

would not affect the economic interests of the concessionaires in return for an unconditional collaboration with the promotion of the regime's positions and interests on domestic politics. Just to give one example of the constant support that Televisa gave to the regime's legitimacy one can cite the constant advertising presented on its channels whenever there was a national holiday, in which it was always stressed that people in Mexico, in subtle contrast with those in other Latin American countries, enjoyed public peace, growth and development. These ads emphasising "stability and peace" in Mexico were part of the agreements between the regime and the private television. This also meant that spaces for opposition groups were very reduced on the TV screens, and that the modern news broadcasts, like the recently created *24 Horas*, became true mirrors of the official domestic policies and the strongest promoters of the president's image, which became an essential duty in the news broadcasts. At the same time, but on the economic front Televisa was founding the pillars of a national multimedia empire through profiting from this closer relationship with the government. As one scholar puts it,

[For Televisa this relationship] has meant the expansion of its market, and great gains; for the government, the private television has become the most important mechanism for the searching for consensus and legitimacy.⁶

January 1973 saw the issuing of the new Federal Electoral Law which for the first time granted the right of all political parties to have free access to radio and television, though only during election times. This new disposition was promoted by the regime as a sign of tolerance and an example of the acceptance of political pluralism. In reality, such spaces for opposition on TV were restricted, on the one hand, to only ten minutes every two weeks, and on the other, to participating in collective programmes by using a few minutes of the half hour that Article 59 of the LFRT of 1960 granted the State per day.

In 1977, the political reform of President López Portillo made an important change to the electoral prerogatives of the parties in using the media by issuing a new law, the Federal Law of Political Organisations and Electoral Procedures, known as LOPPE. In a time when the economy was recovering from the crisis of 1975-6, and when it was considered by the government that the oil reserves and exports could become the long-desired source for sustaining growth and increasing the economic and social re-distribution of benefits,

President López Portillo promoted a political reform that could secure political spaces for “the minority groups” that were not part of the regime’s corporatist networks. Since the largest social groups —workers, bureaucrats and peasants—were incorporated into diverse organisations affiliated to the official party, the reform only provided spaces for institutional channelling of political demands through the electoral arena for those outside corporatism.

The reform of 1977 introduced two crucial changes for parties to access the mass media: it established as their constitutional right the access to the media, and it disposed that such access must be permanent and not restricted to electoral times (Article 41 of the Constitution). These prerogatives were developed in the LOPPE, whose Article 49, section A clearly defined the conditions under which the parties would have access to the media:

- a) The parties will have at their disposal, monthly and equitably, a part of the State air-time on radio and television (NB: this time was part of the daily half an hour granted to the State by the LFRT of 1960).
- b) The programmes of the parties will be preferential within the State air-time (NB: though not within the general broadcasting time).
- c) The space for the parties in the media will be increased during electoral periods.
- d) The parties will freely determine the content of their programmes and the parties will decide the format or combination of formats for presenting these programmes.
- e) The Commission for Radio Broadcasting (of the Secretariat of *Gobernación*) will have under its charge the technical aspects of the parties’ programmes and will determine the dates and time-tables to broadcast these programmes.
- f) These programmes will be transmitted nation-wide.

While at first sight these dispositions seemed to be a great step towards openness, in October 1978 important restrictions were enacted through the publication of a series of regulations that the parties were obliged to follow for producing and transmitting their programmes on the media.⁷ In these regulations, every party was given only fifteen minutes a month for their programmes and the sum of all monthly time for all parties was to

⁶ Zarur Osorio (1996), p.112.

oscillate between two and four hours. Moreover, the Commission for Radio Broadcasting was to be in charge of the production of all parties' programmes and was given the capacity to evaluate and approve "the technical feasibility of their realisation" according to the technological possibilities available. In practice, this constituted a legal precept for censorship, since by alleging technical reasons some opposition parties' programmes were edited or simply not recorded. The Commission for Radio Broadcasting decided to edit images or audio clips from some parties' programmes every time it was considered "appropriate" within the Secretariat of *Gobernación*. For instance, a programme of the Workers' Revolutionary Party (PRT) was censored for about five minutes in the parts where it denounced the existence of political prisoners.⁸ Mejía Barquera carried on a series of interviews to some opposition party's spokesmen in relation to the censorship on their programmes at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s.⁹ In one case, a programme of the Unified Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM) was censored when it directly accused the president of the electoral frauds during the intermediate elections of 1983. This accusation was not heard in the programme. In another case, the PAN's spokesman, Eugenio Ortiz Walls, recognised at the beginning of the 1980s that their programmes had been censored at least twelve times, that the complaint letters they had sent to the Federal Electoral Commission and to the Commission for Radio Broadcasting were useless, and that censorship became more explicit when criticisms were directed at the army or the president.

But if such regulations enabled the regime to directly censor the "unpleasant" transmissions of the parties, the obstacles to freely transmitting were not only on the regime's side, but also on those of the networks themselves. Further controls on information were practised within the TV networks, both public and private. Thus the parties were facing two different kinds of obstacles to broadcasting their messages, one related to the regime's legal capacity to actually censor their programmes and the other related to the TV's internal criteria to permitting the parties to freely broadcast their messages.

⁷ Fernando Mejía Barquera, "Televisión y política" in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas and María Del Pilar Sevilla (coords.), *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana II*, Mexico City, Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa, 1999, pgs.36-37.

⁸ *UnomásUno*, October 14th 1981, p.17.

⁹ Mejía Barquera (1999), pgs.40-41.

The public television network –TCM and Channel 13--¹⁰ had strict internal controls over political information and on the spaces allocated to opposition parties. Since January 1977 all public media were operated under the direct supervision of a new General Direction of Radio, Television and Cinematography (RTC) within the structure of the Secretariat of *Gobernación*. RTC was enabled, according to the Internal Regulation of the Secretariat of *Gobernación*, to supervise that all radio and television broadcasts remained within “the limits of respect to private life, public peace and morality” (creating a still deeper confusion between all the already existing public facilities related to radio and TV). Article 17 of this same regulation stipulates that RTC has the faculty to “co-ordinate, foment, and *regulate* the production, co-production, distribution, exhibition, and transmission of all materials of radio, television and film”.

The first Director General of RTC was Margarita López Portillo, the sister of the president, who as soon as she took office declared that her “strongest passion” in that post was “to care for the image of the president”.¹¹ The most important news broadcast of Channel 13, *Siete Días*,¹² though relatively balanced and open on international information, was hardly more than just a daily amalgam of official bulletins sent by the different ministries and governmental dependencies on domestic matters due to its lack of autonomous informational criteria.¹³ Spaces for opposition and critical opinions were practically non-existent under such circumstances.

As for private television, it was no less difficult for parties to find spaces there for broadcasting their programmes. The regulation of the LOPPE adopted on January 1978 established that the political parties’ programmes must be transmitted at 19:30 in national TV channels. However, since 1980 Televisa decided not to transmit those programmes at those times on Channel 2, its most important nation-wide channel, due to a drop in ratings. It offered instead some spaces on Channel 5, whose signal could be received in some states outside Mexico City, but it was not a “national TV channel”, as the law established. This offer was rejected by opposition parties and, as a consequence of their complaints before

¹⁰ In November 1975, eight licenses that belonged to the the private Telecadena Mexicana were revoked and re-awarded to the public TV network, Channel 13, which as a consequence of its wider transmission capacity increased its audience in the following years. In 1980 Channel 13 had 42 television stations to retransmit its programming, and TRM, the other educational public network more than 90.

¹¹ Declaration given to *El Nacional*, July 15th 1976.

¹² Created in December 20th 1978.

¹³ Arredondo (1991), p.144.

the Federal Electoral Commission and the Commission for Radio Broadcasting, Televisa decided in 1982, an electoral year, to transmit again these programmes on Channel 2. Nevertheless, the company decided to broadcast those programmes at 14:00 hours instead of at 19:30 arguing that according to the agreement reached in 1969, all public transmissions should not endanger the economic stability of the stations.¹⁴ This time though opposition parties complained before the Commission for Radio Broadcasting, the PRI and its minor ally, the PARM, accepted such time-tables offered by Televisa in the Federal Electoral Commission.¹⁵ In any case, the time-tables proposed by Televisa did not represent any loss for the PRI, since that party was already receiving a constant coverage by Televisa that outweighed the times strictly conceded by law to that party. Most of the information on the PRI was presented as "news" in order not to contravene the legal dispositions that restricted each party's programming time. For the official party, the 15 minute programmes constituted only a minimal part of the real time that the broadcasting media devoted to covering its agenda.¹⁶

Since the 1970s, Televisa consolidated as the most important media network through which the government presented its viewpoints on domestic affairs and through which the image of the president was promoted. In practice, Televisa became a virtual ministry of information and communication of the regime. This was in large part due to the enormous penetration of the private television consortium and its huge economic importance in the private world. Televisa was by far the most important TV network in Mexico. For example, of all the publicity expenditure invested on television in 1976 only 3.2 percent was allocated to Channel 13, and most of the rest went to Televisa.¹⁷ This disproportionate importance of Televisa *vis-à-vis* the public channels also demonstrates the fact that by the early 1980s the public television network was in the middle of a chaotic situation due to the irresponsibility of its managers, especially of the sister of the president.¹⁸ This condition

¹⁴ See Chapter 2 for the analysis of the discussion on the 12.5 percent of the daily air-time of transmissions on radio and television conceded to the State as fiscal payment.

¹⁵ Mejía Barquera (1999), pgs. 38-40.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.43.

¹⁷ De Noriega and Leach (1979), p.65.

¹⁸ If at the end of the Echeverría administration, Channel 13 accumulated a debt of 200 million pesos due to the enormous expenditures invested on the premature inauguration of its new installations, thing worsened as soon as Margarita López Portillo assumed the control of RTC. In six years the channel had seven different directors (Abel Quezada occupied that office for only one day!), a total lack of rational planning, and constant

brought as a consequence that even the public organs and ministries preferred Televisa's channels than the public one for their advertising. The journalist Francisco Ortiz Pinchetti shows that in 1978 of the twenty-two public companies that inserted ads on TV, most of them preferred Televisa (72 percent) over public Channel 13 (28 percent).¹⁹ Another example is given by the fact that, during the years of their nationalisation (1982-1990), the two largest banks in Mexico, Banamex and Bancomer, allocated almost all of their advertising in Televisa.²⁰ And for the government there was no interest in displacing Televisa from such a privileged situation.

On the one hand, the Mexican State was still unable to elaborate a consistent public media long-term project. On the other, Televisa knew perfectly well how to profit from such a situation and reinforced its collaboration with the regime. For instance, the trips of President López Portillo to Asia were covered exclusively by Televisa. By the 1980s, the importance of Televisa, its national penetration and its collaboration in promoting a positive image of the regime, made it more reliable for the government than its own chaotic public TV network.

Therefore, in spite of eventual misunderstandings, the conflicts between private TV and the regime have been essentially circumstantial and restricted to very specific policies. Also, in spite of the many declarations that even announced the possibility of the nationalisation of the private media during the early years of President Echeverría,²¹ private television maintained itself on the side of the regime and its strategy was not to face the government, but to reinforce its support to it. Televisa did not use its ample penetration and strength to claim for more open spaces, for political *apertura* (in which it could even legally defend its interests in a more predictable manner), but strengthened its collaboration.

It is possible to think that this docile reaction was in part due to both, the still low social and political penetration –at a national level, at least—of any alternative political organisation²² outside of the official corporatist system, *and* the weakness of civil society

rivalries within its internal bureaucratic structure, which made improvisation and caprice the distinctive feature of the channel's image.

¹⁹ In "Televisión rural del Estado al servicio de Televisa", in *Proceso*, no.141, July 16th 1979.

²⁰ In Zarur Osorio, (1996), p.115.

²¹ See Chapters One and Two.

²² At the time, the most relevant opposition party, the PAN, was suffering a deep internal crisis in the 1970s that even impeded it from presenting a candidate for the presidential elections of 1976.

organisations. It was then quite difficult to find alternative social forces on which to base any solid support for challenging the regime at that time. But the principle explanation lies in the fact that for private TV it was extremely convenient to support the regime, since the regime never ceased to provide all kind of incentives and benefits to its own development and expansion. In October 1972, during the celebration of the Radio Broadcasting Week, the Secretary of *Gobernación* assured the concessionaires that though the government was conscious about its own duties and responsibilities in matters of radio and television, it was going to be extremely careful in order "not to harm any of the legitimate interests of the industry" in a clear message not to endanger their economic development.²³

In this sense, the aggressive declarations of the government officials against private broadcasting of the early 1970s served only to legitimise the direct acquisition of the State of certain radio and TV stations (Channel 13), which in any case, never have constituted an alternative to private broadcasting. Actually, the concessionaires were not opposed to the direct participation of the State in the media industry, but only to any serious attempt to replace the dominant commercial model based on private property with another based on the exclusive public control of the media.

In 1976, the Vice-President of Televisa, Miguel Alemán, defined the existence in Mexico of a mixed system of mass media composed by a coexistence of a private commercial model with a public model, each with specific functions to accomplish. The functional division of TV in Mexico served not only to legitimise the harmonious coexistence of the two models, but to differentiate the task of private media, entertainment and, secondarily, information, from that of the public channels, education and cultural diffusion.

This system became known as the "Mexican formula" of mass media.²⁴ According to Alemán, the "Mexican formula" was the expression in the media of the actual mixed economic model in which the public and the private coexist and help each other for the development of the country. The aim of this "Mexican Formula" was to improve the "social functions of television" (to entertain, to inform and to educate the population). For these purposes each individual television channel had a specific function: "Channel 4 is dedicated to raising communication and inter-communication [sic] between the urban popular sectors

²³ Declaration of the Secretary Mario Moya Palencia, October 1972. Cited in Arredondo and Sánchez (1987), p.176.

²⁴ Miguel Alemán Velasco, "El Estado y la televisión", in *Nueva Política*, n.3, July-September, 1976.

of the Valley of Mexico; Channel 2 was occupied with satisfying the needs and exigencies of the middle classes —of the traditional values of the Mexican families; Channel 5 keeps a global interest in various matters, thus seeking to be a window to the world [sic]; Channel 8 accomplishes the transcendental task of “feeding back the country from its provinces’ richness” [sic —whatever this means: *retroalimentar al país de la riqueza de su provincia*]. In Channel 8 all the states are presented and provide a positive breath against the asphyxiating centralism; Channel 13 defines its functions from a cultural base, satisfying the requirements of the artistic and intellectual sectors; Channel 11 transmits educational material...”²⁵

In spite of this division of functions, the government was not expected to reduce the supportive policies towards Televisa. One need only remember that notwithstanding the legal obligation that the private consortium had for ceding daily 12.5 percent of its air-time to State programming, the annual report elaborated by RTC in 1979 showed that of the total 870 hours that corresponded to such a percentage. Channel 2, for instance, only transmitted 121 hours and 57 minutes.²⁶ Moreover, this support for the development of the consortium not only remained unaltered, but actually increased. For instance, the National Telecommunications Network (RNT) —of which the system of microwaves network was part—became an instrument for subsidising the private broadcasting activities. According to the law, the concessionaires are obliged to use the RNT for conducting their transmission within the national territory. The concessionaires must pay for the right to use this service. The fees for these rights are established in the Federal Rights Law (*Ley de Derechos Federales*) and they are valid for one year. However, between 1970 and 1976, the telecommunications policy of President Echeverría explicitly stated that for such RNT services low fees and “promotional tariffs” were required in order to secure television signals for all the geographical zones where private television had not reached so far.²⁷ The low tariffs appear lower still when compared with the income that the concessionaires earned for publicity. For instance, in 1985 the cost of using the RNT for sending a two-hours programme to Spain was 645,700 Mexican pesos, while the cost of 60 seconds of

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.195.

²⁶ *Reporte general sobre el uso de los Tiempos del Estado y de los Tiempos Fiscales en Radio y Televisión durante 1978*, DGRTC, Secretaría de Gobernación, 1979, pgs.56-9.

²⁷ Carlos Núñez Arellano, *Las telecomunicaciones en México*, P.R.I., Instituto de Estudios Políticos, Económicos y Sociales, 1974, p.13.

publicity in a Football game in Channel 2 was over 3,000,000 Mexican pesos.²⁸ Moreover, if the tariffs for using the RTN were increased every year, the publicity fares of, say Televisa, increased every three months. But if this disparity was already noticeable, according to a documented research published by the weekly *Proceso* in January 1989, for more than one year in 1988 Televisa did not even pay the corresponding tariff for using the RNT, becoming subject of a fine according to the Federal Rights Law.²⁹ According to the same source, President De la Madrid emitted a decree exempting Televisa of paying such fine to the Secretariat of Communications and Transports.

Also, as an extension of the RNT, Televisa received the use of satellite networks, which were then developing in Mexico. In 1980 Televisa and the Secretariat of Communications and Transports signed a covenant through which they established the basis for increasing the number of satellite terrestrial stations. The private consortium was supposed to invest 200 million pesos and the government only 70 million pesos, but the former would have priority in sending its signals except in cases of emergency. This was the antecedent of a complementary project for launching a domestic satellite system in which Televisa has played a crucial role and has obtained the possibility of sending its signals to all of Latin America, Western Europe, North Africa and some other Middle East countries.³⁰

By the 1980s the mutual support between Televisa and the regime were so solidly grounded and their relations were on such good terms that, as one scholar observes,

The top directives of Televisa have practically an unlimited disposition of resources to the attainment of the corporation goals. According to a top executive, they count on one of the best—or possibly the best—information stock system in Latin America, which storage information not only on daily matters, but in a wide variety of topics. In consequence, he sustains, Televisa has developed narrow co-operation contacts with the Secretariat of Gobernación and the General Attorney of the Republic in Mexico, and with the FBI and the CIA in the United States.³¹

The support that Televisa has given to the regime can be exemplified in the ways that its most important news broadcasts, *24 Horas*, presented the information on domestic political

²⁸ Fernando Mejía Barquera, "Impuestos y tarifas. Los recursos de la nación a bajo precio", in Trejo Delarbre. (1988), pgs.199 and 203.

²⁹ Cited in Trejo Delarbre. *Ver. pero tambien leer*. México City, Instituto Nacional del Consumidor. 1991. p.89.

³⁰ For a discussion of the initial phases of such project see: Fátima Fernández Christlieb, "Génesis del sistema de satélites Morelos", *Información Científica y Tecnológica*, Mexico City, CONACyT, vol.7, no.100, 1985.

³¹ Miguel Basáñez, *La lucha por la hegemonía en México, 1968-1980*, Mexico City, Siglo XXI, 1985, pgs.104-105.

affairs. As was said in Chapter One this news broadcast became the most prominent reference for domestic political life. And Zabłudowsky, though strongly criticised in certain academic sectors for his biased defence of the regime, consolidated his position as the most influential newscaster in Mexico.³² According to a study on the news content of *24 Horas* in 1983, the news on domestic political and economic matters constituted only 23 percent of the total number of news issues presented and slightly more than 25 percent of the total time of the broadcast.³³ This study showed that specifically on the political news, *24 Horas* privileged information on the speeches and on the daily agenda of the president and other top level governmental officials. Information about anything more than discourses and symbolic political acts was almost absent. *24 Horas* presented the activities of the president and his close collaborators serving more as a governmental communications office than as a true news broadcast programme.

This uncritical and biased way of presenting the political information in the news broadcasts was not the only way television had for closing the spaces for other opposition forces and organisations. Since the 1980s some opposition parties started to explore the possibilities of buying—with their own resources—spaces on TV in which to insert their ads and improve their presence in these media. But as a scholar notes, there were two kinds of obstacles that the parties had to overcome when inserting their ads.³⁴ On the one hand, many stations refused to sell them spaces on which to insert their ads and spots. And, on the other, even when the stations agreed to sell them spaces for ads, it often occurred that at the very last moment such ads were simply not transmitted disregarding the previously signed contracts.

In the 1980s opposition parties strengthened their presence in the political life, especially the PAN in northern Mexico.³⁵ The vote against the PRI in the northern state of Chihuahua in 1986 reflected both the increasing electoral dissidence of the urban middle sectors—to which a large number of popular groups were to follow in 1988, but this time gathered

³² *24 Horas* was the most expensive programme in the Mexican TV on which to insert ads and commercial spots. In 1988, according to the Directorate of Publicity Media, the insertion of one minute of commercial advertising costed 96,900,000 pesos.

³³ Pablo Arredondo Ramírez and Lourdes Zermeno Torres, "La política informativa de Televisa en los Estados Unidos (El caso de *24 Horas*)", in *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, University of California, vol.2, no.1, Winter 1986.

³⁴ Mejía Barquera (1999), p.44.

³⁵ See Chapter Three.

around a centre-left project—and the fraudulent character of the electoral processes in Mexico, since in spite of the massive vote for the PAN the PRI “obtained” the victory. On national TV channels and news broadcasts these events of Chihuahua were simply not reported, as if they were inexistent. In June 1996, Televisa’s Vice-President of News, Félix Cortés, clearly stated that “the *PRI* militance of the top executives of this company shapes our information policy. Our newscasters comment on the news based on the political sympathies of the company”.³⁶ In September Miguel Alemán, then Chairman of Televisa, was interviewed by the weekly *Proceso* and when asked about the underreporting of Televisa of the elections of Chihuahua, he answered “I am a *Priista*. I believe in the PRI.”³⁷ The words of “Lolita” Ayala, the newscaster of the news broadcast *Muchas Noticias* (Channel 4) and for more than fifteen years a close collaborator of Zabłudowsky in *24 Horas*, are also quite telling. She said that in relation to politics,

We will inform on all that we consider to be news, even in relation to the PAN or to street demonstrations in Mexico City, subjects that were not reported previously. This, however, does not mean that *we give any importance to them*.³⁸

Against this discrimination and manipulation of information of Televisa the PAN organised a demonstration on July 15th 1986, outside the company’s headquarters in Mexico City. What is important to note is that the demonstrators and its sympathisers largely belonged to the urban middle classes who formed the most important target audiences for Televisa, but who were at the same time receptive to the conservative urban political message of the PAN and deceived by the corruption and economic failures of the PRI. The militant support of Televisa to the regime was not new at all, but since the mid-1980s it became increasingly incompatible with the preferences of its most important audiences: the urban middle sectors.

Evidently, the behaviour of public television was not different from Televisa’s in relation to the spaces given to political opposition. In 1983, President De la Madrid created the Social Communication System of the Federal Government for co-ordinating all the public mass media. It was composed of three different organisations, the Mexican Institute of Radio

³⁶ In *La Jornada*, June 10th 1986.

³⁷ *Proceso*, no.515, September 1986.

³⁸ Words of Lolita Ayala cited in *Expansión*, November 26th 1986. Italics are mine.

(IMER), the Mexican Institute of Television (IMEVISION) and the Mexican Institute of Cinematography (IMCINE). IMEVISION was composed of Channel 13, the television network of TRM with 99 stations that could transmit at a national level, Channel 8 of Monterrey and two producing agencies, PRONARTE (which disappeared in 1985) and Teleproductora del DF. In 1985 the network of TRM was used for launching a new public TV channel, Channel 7, which in 1986 destined more resources to the promotion of presidential activities and the president's image (\$ 803.1 million Pesos), than to the transmission of entertainment programmes (\$ 711.3 million Pesos) or its news broadcasts (\$ 46.7 million Pesos).³⁹

The complaints of the opposition parties both in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Federal Electoral Commission against restrictions on television to the transmission of their messages, and against the "quite unfair treatment" that they received during TV coverage, had minor impacts. The parties wanted more—and better—access to TV. However, such petitions were largely ignored by the regime. In December 1987, in Congress, with the PRI majority, a new Federal Electoral Code was passed. This code simply repeated the 1978 formulae by which "the parties can have 15 minutes per month" and that this amount of time "should increase during electoral times".⁴⁰

The traditional biased ways in which television treated opposition parties, and political information in general, was expected to maintain during the 1988 general elections. But this time a new ingredient was added to the electoral process: for the first time there was a serious external challenge to the PRI candidate. This was not the first time when official party candidates were challenged by relatively strong opponents. As in the elections of 1940, 1946 and 1952, in the elections of 1988 the official party's candidate faced rivals of certain political leverage, all of them former members of the party's elite, as Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was himself. The difference was that this time the challenger was not only backed up by other political elite groups, but he counted also on the support of important social sectors, mainly urban, young, and educated. This feature made the 1988 electoral process a truly competitive one, though still unequal and unfair.

In October 4th 1987, the former Secretary of Planning and Budget, Carlos Salinas De Gortari, became the official PRI candidate. The announcement was made with great

³⁹ IMEVISION Budget, 1996, cited in Zarur Osorio (1996), p.94.

publicity and nation-wide TV coverage. In contrast, the inauguration of the campaigns of the other two most important candidates, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (FDN) and of Manuel J. Clouthier (PAN), were presented on the news broadcasts without much relevance, as minor "news". However, since electoral competition was indeed strong, television finally gave some minimal space to opposition candidates. For instance, Clouthier was invited to the most important opinion programme in Televisa, *Para Gente Grande*, hosted by Ricardo Rocha, in November 29th 1987. In spite of this invitation—perhaps more an outcome of the initiative of Rocha than a deliberate policy of Televisa—it was always clear that Televisa, and TV in general, was supporting the PRI candidate. Two relevant declarations serve to exemplify this point. The first one was made in October 9th 1987 by the President of the CIRT in the sense that the Chamber members "as radio broadcasters and as Mexicans" were]convinced of the coincidence of ideals and aims between them and Carlos Salinas, and therefore they "supported his candidacy without reserves to occupy the Presidency of the Republic".⁴¹ The second declaration was made by the Chairman of Televisa in January 15th 1988, Emilio Azcarraga Milmo. He declared that Televisa was a private firm with the right to present what it considered to be information, and that in relation to politics there should be no doubt: "we are with the PRI, members of the PRI, and we have always been with the PRI; we do not believe in any other formula. And as members of that party we will do everything possible for making our candidate to win".⁴² It is difficult to find an example of more clear commitment of the media entrepreneurs to the official candidate.

Opposition candidates complained about the totally supportive role of television in favour of the official candidate, and in January 1988 Clouthier requested that his followers and sympathisers stop watching *24 Horas* and demonstrate outside Televisa's headquarters against its extremely biased method of informing on the campaigns.

The official answer to Clouthier's complaints was given by the secretary general of the Industry of Television and Radio Workers Union, the PRI deputy Nezahualcóyotl De la Vega, who in May 23rd 1988 published in the newspapers a long letter in which he took pains to summarise all the spaces that the broadcasting media have given to Clouthier's

⁴⁰ "Código Federal Electoral", in *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, December 12th 1987.

⁴¹ Declarations of CIRT President, Julio Velarde, in *Excelsior*, October 10th 1987, first section.

⁴² Declarations of Emilio Azcarraga Milmo published in *La Jornada*, January 16th 1988. This was not the first—nor the last—time that the President of Televisa declared his sympathies for the PRI. In 1982, before the general elections he also declared himself "a soldier of the PRI" (In *Proceso*, No. 323, May 17th 1982, p.23).

campaign, emphasising that the PAN's candidate should recognise the impartial behaviour of the media.⁴³ De la Vega underlined that Clouthier not only received the time he was entitled by law according to the electoral weight of his party, but also additional time on the news broadcasts.⁴⁴ That same evening, Jacobo Zabludowsky, in the late evening edition of *24 Horas*, read the entire text inserted by De la Vega, and made it clear that the media, Televisa in particular, had been absolutely impartial in the campaigns.

Outside Mexico City the story echoed: opposition candidates, Cárdenas and Clouthier, were denied spaces on the local broadcast media, and when they obtained some spaces their campaigns were simply under-reported, as in the cases of the states of Hidalgo in January, Campeche and Yucatan in February, or Chihuahua in March 1988. There were two kinds of justification, which the entrepreneurs gave for restricting spaces to the opposition parties. One can be labelled the Alemán-Zabludowsky formula (which was also mentioned by De la Vega in his press insertion), i.e. to give to each party coverage that corresponds to its electoral strength. For some concessionaires it was clear: they would not give even one more minute. In this respect, Zabludowsky defined the criteria Televisa followed for presenting political information on the campaigns in the following terms,

We studied the procedures in other countries. In Italy, the four most important [television] channels have distinct political orientations and function accordingly, favoring their preferred party... In the United States, the political parties can buy as much air time as they want. In Televisa we believe that the political parties should be assigned air time in the news in proportion to the quantity of votes that they received in the last elections.⁴⁵

The other justification was simply a commercial reason, as given by the CIRT⁴⁶ and by the Under-Secretary of *Gobernación*.⁴⁷ This justification stated that though the private media entrepreneurs had the legal obligation to give to each party the air-times established by law, each of them were free to decide according to his/her interests whether or not to sell any additional space for the parties to insert their ads or present their points of view. In turn, for many entrepreneurs, the convenience in selling or not selling these spaces depended on the

⁴³ Insertion titled "Miente Clouthier!" in *La Jornada*, May 23rd 1988.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ Cited in Ilya Adler, (1993), p.157.

⁴⁶ Open letter published in *La Jornada* in February 18th 1988.

⁴⁷ Declarations of Fernando Pérez Correa published in *La Jornada* in February 26th 1988.

parties' capacities for constantly buying and becoming part of their regular clientele.⁴⁸ This "commercial approach" served to justify the greater access that the PRI had within these media, since it was, evidently, the richest party of all and the only one that could afford to pay for a constant presence in these media.

In a detailed study by Pablo Arredondo on the ways television news broadcasts, *24 Horas* (Channel 2) and *Día a Día* (Channel 13), covered the 1988 electoral campaigns and reported on the information related to them, interesting data was found.⁴⁹ Taking a sample of 55 days selected at random between September 1987 and August 1988, he found that from the total 3,660 news registered, only 435 (11.88 percent) referred to the electoral campaigns. Of the total time devoted to the news, i.e. 272,998 seconds, only 17.26 percent was devoted to electoral information (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1
Electoral News Coverage in TV Broadcasts, September 1987-August 1988

News broadcasts	Total number of news items presented	Electoral news items presented*	Time of News (in seconds)	Time of Electoral News *
24 Horas Televisa	1,216	141 (11.6%)	75,332	13,043 sec. (17.31%)
Día a Día IMEVISION	2,444	294 (12.03)	197,666	34,069 sec. (17.24%)
Total	3,660	435 (11.88%)	272,998	47,112 sec. (17.26%)

*The number below refers to the percentages in relation to the total number and time of news on each TV broadcast.

Source: Arredondo Ramirez, (1990), pgs.60-61.

With regard to the time devoted to inform on the elections and the number of news issues presented on the elections, all news broadcasts greatly favoured the PRI (Table 4.2). *Día a Día* news broadcast supported the PRI more openly, since this party received 67 percent of the news and almost 90 percent of the time, while *24 Horas* devoted it 60 percent of the news and 70 percent of the time. Obviously this difference did not mean that Televisa was more open than Channel 13. If it is true that *24 Horas* gave slightly more space to the other three largest opposition parties (while totally excluding the two smallest opposition parties)

⁴⁸ Arredondo Ramirez, "Los medios de comunicación en la lucha político-electoral", in Arredondo, Fregoso and Trejo Delarbre (1991), pgs.71-73.

⁴⁹ Pablo Arredondo Ramirez, "Los noticieros de televisión y la sucesión presidencial de 1988", in Seminar on *Medios, democracia y fines*, Mexico City, UNAM, Frederick Naumann Stiftung, Notimex, 1990.

than public television, the information that was presented on them was far from being impartial. An example of this was the programme *60 Minutos* hosted by the journalist Juan Ruiz Healy, who just three days before the election day, presented a special issue on the candidates profiles and careers on which those of the opposition parties were derided and their projects disapproved.

Table 4.2
Electoral Coverage Time (in seconds) on TV News Broadcasts by Parties, September 1987-August 1988

News Broadcasts	Duration of News	PRI	PAN	FDN	PMS	PRT	PDM
24 Horas Televisa	13,043 sec.	9,081 sec. (69.62%)	705 sec. (5.41%)	595 sec. (4.56%)	573sec. (4.39%)	0	0
Día a Día Imevision	34,069 sec.	30,089 sec. (88.32 %)	778 sec. (2.28%)	169 sec. (0.50%)	345 sec. (1.01%)	171 sec. (0.50%)	204 sec. (0.60%)
Total	47,112 sec	39,170 sec. (83.14%)	1,483 sec. (3.14%)	764 sec. (1.62%)	918 sec. (1.94%)	171 sec. (0.36%)	204 sec. (0.43%)

Source: Calculated with the data provided by Arredondo Ramírez (1990), pgs.61, 67, 71 and 72.

The evening of the election day, July 6th, a general “breakdown of the computing system” impeded the preliminary results from being shown. This failure of the computing network was minimised by the media, but it generated the suspicion that a large-scale fraud had been committed, as was alleged by both Cárdenas and Clouthier. The fraud was never proved and the television news broadcastings immediately presented information supporting the victory of Carlos Salinas. In the following days, programmes were devoted to interviewing the most important PRI political figures who evidently advocated the victory of their party. No space was given to opposition or even to any critical opinion against the regime.⁵⁰ On the transmission of July 19th Zabłudowsky devoted a great part of his programme to reading the reviews on the elections in México, from some of the most prestigious international newspapers (the list included *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *El País*): all of which acknowledged the victory of the PRI-and therefore helped to legitimise it.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pgs. 163-165.

Though the PRI obtained the victory in the presidential election, opposition parties obtained the largest ever number of seats in Congress.⁵¹ The opposition parties, with their 235 Federal Deputies, decidedly pressed for better terms in the electoral competition and for more equitable conditions in the electronic mass media.⁵² In September 24th 1990 the *Official Daily* published the new Federal Code for Electoral Institutions and Procedures (COFIPE). The Federal Electoral Commission was substituted by a Federal Electoral Institute (IFE). Though the Secretary of *Gobernación* was still the president of that organisation, more balanced space was given to the parties' representatives through the removal of former Executive representatives. In matters of transmissions, the IFE was supposed to receive the tariffs and costs for ads from the concessionaires—and the prices were not to be any higher than the equivalent commercial prices—and presented them to the parties allowing them to buy spaces according to their interests and convenience. This was a great advancement for the parties.

However, there were also other dispositions that kept some advantages for the PRI. For instance, though the 1990 Law maintained the 15 minutes monthly access to broadcasting, Article 44, section II stated that the increase in time that each party would receive during electoral processes would be proportional to its electoral strength, (instead of the previous egalitarian distribution of this additional elections' time). This disposition stated that during campaigns, the PRI would maintain a more privileged position. As was expected, opposition parties immediately raised objections, though at the end the PRI passed the law with the approval of the PAN. The 1991 mid-term elections were held under such provisions and the PRI obtained important victories that helped it to recover the control over the federal congress.⁵³

However, important changes were about to transform Mexican television in the mid-terms: In September 14th 1990 it was announced in the Secretariat of *Gobernación* that the nationwide Channel 7, the Mexico City Channel 22 and the Monterrey Channel 8 were going to be privatised. In April 1992, the government added to that original "public media offer" Channel 13, the newspaper *El Nacional* and COTSA, a theatres manager company. The State was, in the words of President Salinas, redefining its role in the communications

⁵¹ See Chapter Three.

⁵² Raúl Trejo Delarbre, *La sociedad ausente. Comunicación, democracia y modernidad*, Mexico City, Cal y Arena, 1992, p.43.

policy, since it was to cease to be the direct owner of mass media, though it would keep its role in "regulating the concessions, granting freedom of expression, protecting the rights of the communicators, and creating the conditions for their development".⁵⁴ The sale of IMEVISION responded to the privatising atmosphere that characterised the administration of Salinas. His economic programme was amply supported by the private business world – to which Salinas provided many facilities to flourish—since a total coincidence of interests and aims was recognised in it after years of populism and revolutionary discourses in the 1970s. As one scholar notices,

The decision to privatise public television was not difficult since Televisa was transmitting the governmental message, and demonstrated its effectiveness and compromise with the modernising project launched by Miguel De la Madrid and Carlos Salinas... The Salinas' government and the entrepreneur Emilio Azcárraga understood each other and recognised their interests' affinities.⁵⁵

The good terms in the relations between Televisa and the Salinas government was well exemplified when, in November 28th 1993, the consortium, through its company Radiotelevisora de México Norte, S.A. de C.V., obtained sixty-two new television frequencies, for developing the nation-wide transmission capacity of its Channel 9 (former Channel 8).⁵⁶ In this way Televisa was rewarded for its loyalty and support. This loyalty was also expected from Radio Televisora del Centro, the group that finally acquired Channels 13, 7 and 8, since the way the privatisation process was carried out was not free from suspicions and unclear actions even led opposition parties in the Chamber of Deputies to request for a revision of such processes. The revision was presided over by PRI deputies who, as one may expect, did not find any major irregularity in the privatisation process.⁵⁷ In

⁵³ See Chapter Three.

⁵⁴ *La Jornada*, April 10th 1992.

⁵⁵ Zarur Osorio (1996), p.106.

⁵⁶ Alejandro Olmos, "Algunos protagonistas de la televisión", in Sánchez de Armas and María del Pilar Ramírez (1999), p.292. It is important to note that those 62 concessions that Televisa obtained were part of the 152 television stations of Channel 13. When this channel was privatised in July 1993, it only counted on 90 stations in the country, since the rest were reserved to be given to Televisa in November that year. In this way, at the end of 1993 Televisa had a total of 208 television stations.

⁵⁷ On April 1st 1993 the Official Daily published the names of the private groups interested in buying the public TV Channels: Geo Multimedia (of Raymundo Gómez Flores), Radio y Televisión del Centro (of Ricardo Salinas Pliego and Francisco Aguirre), Corporación de Medios de Comunicación (of Adrián Saba, Joaquín Vargas and Clemente Serna), and Cosmovisión (of Javier Sánchez Campuzano, William Karab and Javier Pérez de Anda). The most experienced group was Corporación de Medios de Comunicación, since Vargas was the President of another important media group, Multivisión, and Clemente Serna was the main shareholder of Radio Red. The weakest group seemed to be Radio y Televisión del Centro, especially after

this manner, in July 1993, the second largest private television network in the country, under the name of Televisión Azteca, S.A (TV Azteca) came into operation. The consolidation of this new network was to prove to be decisive for changing the *status quo* in which television had developed—as will be seen in further chapters—, since it brought a serious competitor to a landscape in which traditionally Televisa used to hold sway, and this situation, in turn, would have consequences on the role of television in politics.⁵⁸ However, during the first year of existence, TV Azteca was not a serious threat to Televisa and it did not seem to be interested in offering any true alternative to Televisa's programming. This was not surprising if one takes into account the words of its chairman, Ricardo Salinas Pliego, who declared in an interview that for him, television was essentially an entertainment means that should play down the ideological and political contents, and even its news broadcastings.⁵⁹ This was the context in which the campaigns of 1994 started.

In September 1993 reforms to the COFIPE introduced some changes that favoured greater equity and transparency in the ways the electronic media reported the political campaigns. Though some articles and dispositions were still a matter of debate and disagreement among the parties, like Article 48,⁶⁰ in general terms more equitable conditions were granted for electoral competition. The IFE was given the legal faculty for meeting with the CIRT in order to suggest a series of measurable criteria for transmitting the information

Francisco Aguirre—son of the founder of Grupo Radio Centro and the one with experience in the mass media in that group—refused to increase the capital of the enterprise and instead decided to join Cosmovisión along with Sánchez Campuzano in May 1993. Under such controversial circumstances it was never clear at the end where Ricardo Salinas Pliego had obtained the US\$ 645 million with which he finally became the strongest bidder as announced in July 18th. Three years later, in June 1996, there appeared in the *Miami Herald* some versions published by the journalist Andrés Oppenheimer stating that the brother of the ex-President Carlos Salinas, Raúl Salinas, had loaned a large sum of money (US\$ 29 million) to Ricardo Salinas Pliego to purchase the channels. A few weeks afterwards there were some rumours that even mentioned Raúl Salinas as an important shareholder in that TV network, (Televisión Azteca, S.A.). These irregularities caused some opposition deputies to ask for a revision of the whole privatisation process. In December of that year, the High Contability of the Treasury Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, the one that was in charge of investigating the case, determined that those accusations could not be proved and that the privatisation process had been legal.

⁵⁸ The consequences of a new private terrestrial TV market is analysed in Chapter Seven.

⁵⁹ *El Financiero*, April 22nd 1993, p.12.

⁶⁰ Article 48 established that when two or more parties were interested in buying air-time in one station at the same time, the IFE would be permitted to solve the conflict through the following mechanism. The desired time would be divided into two parts, in which the first one, would be allocated to each party on equal terms, and the second one would be distributed to each party according to the electoral voting proportion obtained in the previous majority election. This meant that in any dispute over the same time tables, the PRI would be benefited.

related to the campaigns in impartial ways. In February 28th that year, the IFE made public a document entitled "*Lineamientos generales aplicables en los noticiarios de radio y televisión respecto de la información y difusión e actividades de campaña de los partidos políticos*". This document contained a series of recommendations that the electoral institute addressed to the television and radio concessionaires and managers in order to provide the audiences with balanced and fair information on the campaigns. The main criteria were:

- ❑ To maintain an equitable transmission time for all the parties (as controlled through the following indicators: total time for each party, voice and images devoted to each party, importance of the news on each party, number of news reported on each party).
- ❑ To present information with impartiality (as measured by the following indicators: kinds of comments on the news, type of judgements and interviews, and number of non-reported relevant facts).
- ❑ To present the images and sounds of the candidates and their campaigns with uniformed technical quality (as measured through the kind and number of shots taken of the candidates, of their meetings and other events and the quality of the sound presented).

Other criteria were also added, such as the right to reply, the presentation of the electoral campaigns in a special section of the news broadcasts, the need for the newscasters to specify whenever they were transmitting a paid information, the respect for the candidates' private life, and so forth. Though the CIRT members were not legally compelled to follow such suggestions, it became a matter of preserving their credibility in the media business, since the IFE, through the Commission for Broadcasting, was responsible for monitoring the most important news broadcasts on radio and TV in order to track the fulfilment of those criteria and the results were to be published. The important thing to note is that for the first time in Mexico the ways in which the media presented political information were to be induced under "impartial and objective" criteria. At least on paper, this represented the greatest "leap forward" for the emergence of open and independent electronic mass media. In the end, despite important advances, the outcome did not live up to such enthusiastic expectations.

On the positive side, it has to be mentioned that both Televisa and TV Azteca decided to open some spaces to political debate and to opposition parties. On July 7th 1994 Televisa

invited the then nine presidential candidates to present their political manifestos on a fifteen minutes programme for each one. Televisa also offered to broadcast the programme on its four channels at different times, so that they could be seen by larger audiences. The candidates accepted the invitation.

In turn, TV Azteca invited them on August 8th, two weeks before the day of the elections, on August 21st. TV Azteca offered a ten minute programme to each candidate. But maybe the most remarkable fact of the 1994 electoral campaigns on the media was the organisation on May 12th of a live political debate by the CIRT—in a somewhat similar fashion to the U.S. debates between the Republican and the Democrat candidates—between the PRI, PAN and PRD presidential candidates. The day before, the debate between the candidates of the other six smaller parties had been transmitted. It must be acknowledged that for the first time, the closing of the campaigns of each of the three largest parties' candidates were also transmitted.

However, the way in which the political information was presented on the television during the 1994 campaigns remained strongly biased in favour of the PRI. Some important and pioneer studies will be cited next. The first study was elaborated by the Commission of Radio Broadcasting of the IFE between June 22nd and August 16th 1994 as part of its monitoring responsibilities and faculties. The outcomes may be seen in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.A below.

As one notices, the time devoted to the official party was superior by far to the time dedicated to any other party. This figure becomes more shocking if one takes into account the individual TV news broadcasts, as in Figure 4.A. The TV news broadcasts monitored were Televisa Channel 2: *Al Despertar* (7:00-10:00), *24 Horas* (14:00-15:00), *24 Horas* (22:30-23:30); Televisa Channel 9: *Muchas Noticias* (20:00-21:00); Televisa Channel 5: *Punto por Punto* (00:30-01:30); TV Azteca Channel 13: *A Primera Hora* (7:00-10:00), *Hechos* (21:30-22:30); Channel 11: *Enlace* (20:30-21:00); and Multivision MMD System⁶¹ transmitting in Channel "AS" or NBC *Para Usted* (21:00-22:30).

⁶¹ In 1984 the entrepreneur Joaquin Vargas—owner of some radio stations and restaurants—received a concession to operate television using the Multipoint Directional System (MMDS) via microwaves. The pressure of Televisa—through its cable TV branch Cablevision—delayed the beginning of the operations of Varga's project until September 1989. In 1993 his TV system had more than 250 thousand subscribers in the country, and by 1997 the figure rose up to 450 thousand. That year he received two more concessions to operate a MMD system in Guadalajara and Monterrey. He later obtained two more concessions in Villahermosa and Merida. Between 1992 and 1995 he established important partnerships with United

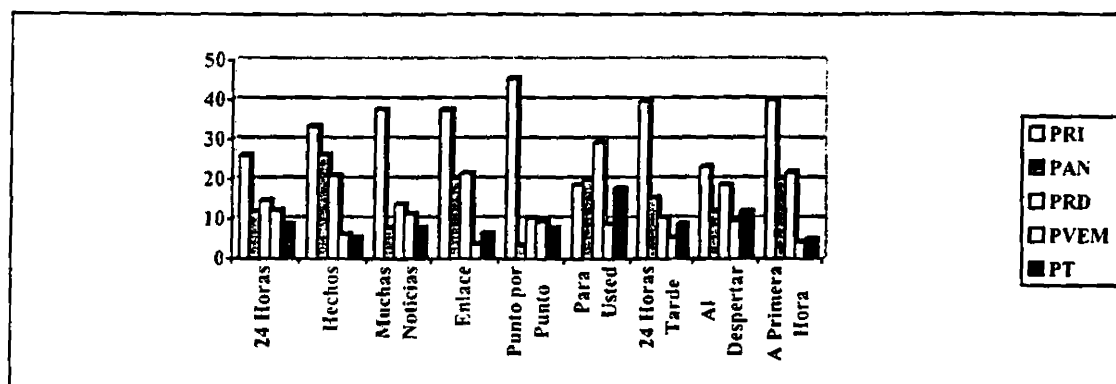
Table 4.3
Total Coverage of the Electoral Campaigns on TV News Broadcasts, June 22nd-
August 16th 1994

	PRI	PRD	PAN	PT	PVEM	PDM	PPS	PFCRN	PARM
Time for news	11h 34'	7h 20'	6h 7''	3h 6'	3h 2'	1h 55'	1h 28'	1h 26'	1h 11'
	24''	43''	38''	55''	56''	55''	31''	50''	37''
Average	30.8%	19.5%	16.3%	9%	8.3%	5.1%	3.9%	3.9%	3.2%

Source: IFE, *Informe global sobre el monitoreo de noticiarios de radio y televisión de los lineamientos sugeridos por la Comisión de Radiodifusión a la Cámara Nacional de Radio y Televisión*, Wednesday 22nd of June to Tuesday 16th of August 1994.

Figure 4.A

Total Coverage Time of the Five Most Important Parties' Campaigns on TV News Broadcasts, June 22nd-August 16th 1994



Source: IFE, *Informe global sobre el monitoreo de noticiarios de radio y televisión de los lineamientos sugeridos por la Comisión de Radiodifusión a la Cámara Nacional de Radio y Televisión*, Wednesday 22nd of June to Tuesday 16th of August 1994.

Also taking as its reference framework, the criteria presented by the IFE in February 1994, the Mexican Academy for Human Rights along with the NGO Civic Alliance decided to carry out the monitoring of ten relevant moments of the campaigns on Televisa's *24 Hours* (Channel 2, from 22:30 to 23:30) and TV Azteca's *Hechos* (Channel 13 from 21:30 to

International Picture, Cablecinema of Venezuela, the Argentinian Cable Society, NBC, Spelling Entertainment, World Vision, Hughes Communications and TV Abril of Brazil. In 1996 he obtained permission to operate the satellite TV system known as Direct To Home Television or DTH. His main rivals are Cablevision—now with a large percentage of shares in the hands of the powerful Grupo Carso—and Televisa's SKY, its alternative of DTH.

22:30), their most important news broadcasts.⁶² In this study, from the time devoted to each party in the broadcasts, the PRI received 13 hours and 53 seconds, whereas the PAN received 5 hours and 32 minutes, and the PRD 5 hours and 29 minutes.

PRI candidate Zedillo also appeared the most on the screens directly explaining his ideas (45 percent of the time controlled for "Voice and image"), and his closest follower was PAN candidate Fernández de Cevallos with only 27 percent of the time. As for the number of news items on the candidates, Zedillo was mentioned in 63 notes, Fernández de Cevallos in 37 and PRD candidate Cárdenas in 43. In *24 Hours* Zedillo also received 12 positive opinion judgements, compared to one for Cárdenas and two for Fernández de Cevallos. The conclusions that Aguayo and Acosta derive from their study are the following.

In their covering of the presidential elections of 1994, the main news broadcasts of the Mexican television (Televisa's *24 Horas* and TV Azteca's *Hechos*) completely ignored the recommendations made by the Federal Electoral Institute. Both with sophisticated and rough methods they favoured the candidates of the Revolutionary Institutional Party and undermined the image of their opponents, especially those of the PAN and the PRD (using also for such purposes a upgraded image of the candidates of the PVEM and the PT) The trend is so clear and consistent that it is hardly coincidental; it is, insfact, the outcome of a deliberate decision.⁶³

A further study was carried out by the AMDH and Civic Alliance, this time focusing on an evaluation of the content of the news presented on all the most relevant news broadcasts of the Mexican television.⁶⁴ These broadcasts were: Televisa's *24 Horas* (Channel 2, from 22:30 to 23:30), *Al Despertar* (Channel 2 from 7:00 to 10:00), and *Muchas Noticias* (Channel 9, from 20:00 to 21:00), TV Azteca's *Hechos* (Channel 13 from 21:30 to 22:30), Channel 11's *Enlace* (20:30 to 21:00) and Multivision's *Para Usted* (Channel "AS" or

⁶² These selected moments were: the nomination of Ernesto Zedillo as the PRI candidate (29th March), the debate between the three candidates (12th May), the meeting between Cárdenas and the *Sub-Comandante Marcos* (16th May), the visit of Zedillo to the National University, UNAM (24th May), the presentation of the economic project of Zedillo (6th June), the visit of Cárdenas to UNAM (8th June), the visit of Diego Fernández, the PAN's candidate, to UNAM (15th June), the presentation of the economic project of Cárdenas (24th June), the meetings of the three candidates with the intellectuals that formed the San Angel Group (29th June with the PAN, 14th July with the PRD, and 18th July with the PRI), and the closing day of the campaigns of each of the three candidates. In Sergio Aguayo Quezada and Miguel Acosta, *Urnas y pantallas. La batalla por la información*, Mexico City, Ed. Océano/Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos, 1997, pgs.43-44.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.75.

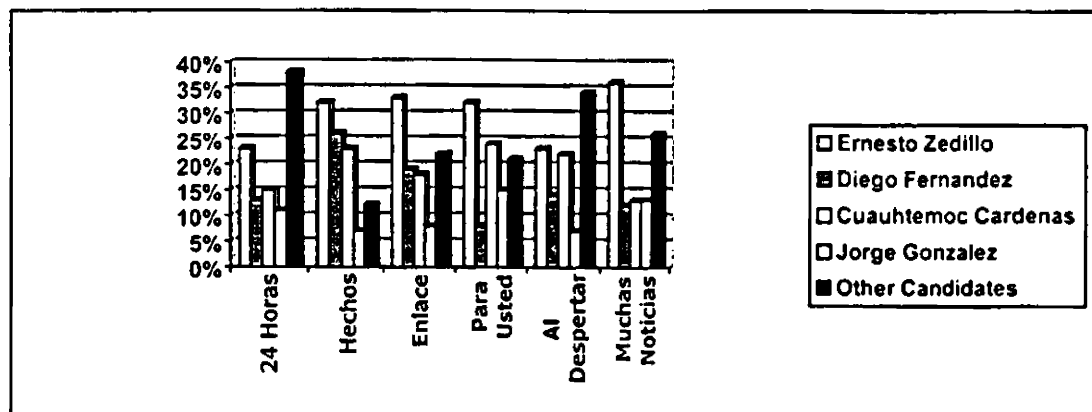
⁶⁴ "Análisis de contenido electoral de seis noticiarios de televisión. (18 de julio al 19 de agosto)", in Miguel Acosta Valverde, Manuel Martínez Torres and Luz Paula Parra R. (coords.), *Las elecciones de 1994 en México vistas por los medios de comunicación. (18 de julio al 21 de agosto)*, Mexico City, AMDH/Alianza Cívica-Observación 94, 1995.

NBC, from 21:00 to 22:30). The period studied was between July 18th to August 19th 1994.⁶⁵

Here I will only cite three relevant variables (out of the seven considered in the study) to show the bias in favour of the PRI. The first one is the share of the TV time each of the candidates received on the six news broadcasts out of a total time of 25 hours, 25 minutes and 57 seconds. On average, the time that the six broadcasts gave to the candidates was as follows: to the PRI candidate, Ernesto Zedillo, 29,2 percent; to the PAN's candidate, Diego Fernández de Cevallos, 14,4 percent; to the PRD's candidate, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, 19,7 percent; to the PVEM's candidate, Jorge González, 10,4 percent and to the rest of the parties 26 percent. As can be seen these averages are also highly coincident with the IFE monitoring between June 22nd and August 16th 1994, whose outcomes were cited above on Table 4.3. Figure 4.B shows the time devoted by each broadcast to the candidates as found by this study of the AMDH and Civic Alliance.

Figure 4.B

Percentage of Time for Candidates on News Broadcasts, July 18th-August 19th



Source: Elaborated with information provided by Valverde, Martinez Torres and Parra Rosales (1995), pgs. 16-17.

All the news broadcasts gave Ernesto Zedillo more time than the rest of the candidates, and only in Televisa's *24 Horas* and *Al Despertar* the accumulated number of time given to the five smaller parties' candidates surpassed the time given to Zedillo. However, there is one quite interesting factor to underline: the study of the AMDH and Civic Alliance reveals that

⁶⁵ The news broadcasts *Al Despertar* and *Muchas Noticias* started to be studied since July 25th 1994.

when taken into account the time devoted to each party, the one that obtained more time was the PRD, not the PRI, which means that though throughout the campaign the official party was the most favoured one in time (as Table 4.3 above shows), during the last month of the campaign more time was devoted to the PRD. Time averages for parties in the last month were as following: PRD, 34 percent; PRI, 19 percent; PAN, 12 percent; PVEM, 7 percent, and the rest of the parties obtained 28 percent of the total time. Nevertheless, as will be shown below, this information presented on the PRD was usually qualified by negative judgements and tendencies. The other two variables that are shown here from the study AMDH and Civic Alliance are the “judgements given by newscasters and reporters”, and the “tendency in the treatment of the news”.

The judgements refer to the qualifying remarks given by newscasters and reporters while presenting the news (see Tables 4.4 and 4.5 below). The tendency in the treatment of news refers to the general position of each news broadcast with respect to the candidates and parties as controlled by the number and kind of images presented on each candidate/party and the adjectives used when referring to them (see Tables 4.6 and 4.7 below).

Table 4.4
Percentage of Negative and Positive *Judgements* for Candidates on the News
Broadcasts

All Six News Broadcasts	Ernesto Zedillo	Diego Fernández	Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas	Jorge González	Other Candidates	Total Percentages
Positive Judgements	53,7%	12,1%	10,6%	5,3%	9,3%	100%
Negative Judgements	5%	35%	30%	25%	5%	100%

Source: Elaborated with information from Valverde, Martínez Torres and Parra Rosales (1995), pgs.36.

Table 4.5
Percentage of Negative and Positive *Judgements* for Parties on the News Broadcasts

All Six News Broadcasts	PRI	PAN	PRD	PVEM	Other Parties	Total Percentages
Positive Judgements	35,2%	29,4%	35,2%	0%	0%	100%
Negative Judgements	11,1%	11,1%	66,6%	11,1%	0%	100%

Source: Elaborated with information from Valverde, Martínez Torres and Parra Rosales (1995), p.37.

Table 4.6
Percentage of Negative and Positive *Tendencies* for Candidates on the News Broadcasts

All Six News Broadcasts	Ernesto Zedillo	Diego Fernández	Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas	Jorge González	Other Candidates	Total Percentages
Positive Tendency	66%	10%	9%	3%	12%	100%
Negative Tendency	0%	29%	56%	10%	5%	100%

Source: Elaborated with information from Valverde, Martínez Torres and Parra Rosales (1995), p.38.

Table 4.7
Percentage of Negative and Positive *Tendencies* for Candidates on the News Broadcasts

All Six News Broadcasts	PRI	PAN	PRD	PVEM	Other Parties	Total Percentages
Positive Tendency	48%	8%	16%	4%	24%	100%
Negative Tendency	4,1%	25%	70,8%	0%	0%	100%

Source: Elaborated with information from Valverde, Martínez Torres and Parra Rosales (1995), p.39.

As for the information presented on the main television channels on the day of the elections, August 21st 1994, the outcomes were as following:⁶⁶

- A) Channel 2 of Televisa: Focused on the “peaceful and ordered attendance to the ballots”. Also, the speeches of Ernesto Zedillo and Diego Fernández de Cevallos were transmitted in whole, but that of Cárdenas was edited and narrated by a reporter.
- B) Channel 13 of TV Azteca: Though it presented a special report on the nine candidates, the only speech they presented completely was that of Zedillo. Cardenas’ and Fernández’s were constantly interrupted.
- C) Channel AS of Multivision: Announced the victory of Zedillo, even before knowing the official results. The main anchorman of this transmission, Pedro Ferriz de Con, discredited the PRD and its national leader, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo on several occasions.
- D) Channel 11 (public channel): Commented on the atmosphere of peace that prevailed throughout the election day. Also stressed the high participation of the voters. It was the most professional coverage, since it tried to maintain a balanced treatment of events and did not present any conclusion until the official results were confirmed.

As may be seen, until 1994, in spite of the changes that had been taking place in the political arena, TV networks were not offering more adequate spaces for the expression of political pluralism. *Was the regime’s pressure over television the main obstacle to them becoming more open, or may one think that it was in the interest of television to remain closed to alternative political expressions?* By 1994, both the political conditions and the specific circumstances of television proved to be more supportive of the second explanation. It is true that the legislation on radio and television (the LFRT of 1960 and the RLFRT of 1973), still remained quite ambiguous and there remains some legal precepts that the regime could interpret in its favour in order to control the media –like the cancellation of the concessions, or the closing of a station with any kind of technical pretext.⁶⁷ It is also true that the regime still exercised certain forms of control especially on television programmes through the Secretariat of *Gobernación*, (in this sense, the role of the Director General of RTC during the Salinas administration, Manuel Villa, became

⁶⁶ “Los medios y la jornada electoral (21 de agosto de 1994)”, in Valverde, Martínez Torres and Parra Rosales (1995), pgs. 154-159.

⁶⁷ See Chapter Two for an analysis of the LFRT of 1960 and the RLFRT of 1973.

notorious due to his constant interfering with the concessionaires news broadcast policies, mainly on radio stations). However, by 1994 many things were already transforming the political and economic landscape in Mexico.

The years of largesse that were the basis of the corporatist system were over with the crisis of the 1980s and more so with the Neo-Liberal policies of the Salinas period. In this respect, public advertising, one of the essential indirect forms of support for the media, was reduced –except of course during electoral times. Though there are no figures to establish a comparison between what the government used to spend during electoral campaigns, a study on the cost of the political advertising during the 1994 electoral campaigns reveals that the PRI was, by far, the party that spent more and whose ads were transmitted at the highest rating time.⁶⁸ Between July 11th and July 17th they only transmitted the ads of Ernesto Zedillo, who appeared exclusively at prime time and on other special programmes with the highest viewer ratings. A calculation of the cost of the PRI candidate's ads comes to a sum of around \$6,686,000.00 Mexican Pesos (around US\$ 1,300,000.00). Between August 1st and August 11th two other parties appeared along with the PRI, the PAN and the Workers Party (PT). From the total number of ads, 187, the PRI inserted 141 (75,4%), the PAN inserted 37 (19,8%) and the PT inserted 9 (4,8%). The total costs were the following: the PRI spent \$16,874,000.00 Mexican Pesos, the PAN spent \$4,374,000.00 Mexican Pesos and the PT spent \$961,000.00 Mexican Pesos. It is important to note that other organisations, like Televisa's workers union, SITATyR, inserted extra ads in favour of the PRI candidate whose cost was calculated to be \$4,410,000.00 Mexican Pesos.⁶⁹

The cost for television expenditures during the 1994 electoral campaign, though high for the PRI, are not completely representative of the total amount of expenditure on publicity that the government was spending during the last years. In spite of the lack of reliable figures on this topic, it is not absurd to think that the total investment in governmental publicity was reduced during the 1980s due to the crisis, but perhaps even more so because of the privatisation of a large number of public enterprises that used to spend large sums of money on publicity. If in 1979 the State was the main client of private television due to the

⁶⁸ "El costo de la propaganda política en los canales 2 de Televisa y 13 de Televisión Azteca (11 de julio al 11 de agosto de 1994)", in Valverde, Martínez Torres and Parra Rosales (1995), pgs.145-149.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.148.

publicity expenditures made by a huge public bureaucratic apparatus,⁷⁰ by 1994 the entire governmental expenditure on publicity within the electronic media was still 47 percent, but this lowered to 40 percent in 1995.⁷¹

At the same time that the relative importance of State publicity decreased, the total investment of publicity on television rose. This means that the private sector allocated to this area larger sums of money that compensated the decrease of public investment in that area. In this way, the total share of publicity that was aimed at television, raised from 62 percent in 1976 to 64 percent in 1990, to 66 percent in 1993 and to 74 percent in 1995.⁷² This means that television was relatively more independent from the government, in economic terms, so that the maintenance of strong loyalty to it was not due to its expenditure on advertising and publicity.

At the same time, the political opposition parties and some other civil organisations were pressing at different levels for the suppress of the constitutional freedoms of speech and of the press within the electronic media. Within such a situation of the economic dismantling of the old corporatist system and political effervescence, many of the unwritten rules on which the regime was based, became more and more diffuse. Finally, it must be taken into account the fact that the main opposition parties, the PAN and the PRD, had been increasingly supported by the same social groups who formed the most important television audiences: the middle sectors. If all this is true, why then did television continue to remain supportive of the PRI against all apparent logic?

Careful observation would lead one to note that during the 1990s there was a subtle, but crucial change in the attitudes of the media entrepreneurs. Television was no longer supporting the regime as it had in the past, but was focusing its support more on the president. This was a subtle, but very important change. This attitude reached its climax with Carlos Salinas. The economic project of Salinas, based on a total support for private business and capital, was incompatible with the old structures on which the regime was based. With Salinas, the old nationalist and populist discourse and the corporatist logic of the policies were replaced by a decided emphasis on globalisation, economic

⁷⁰ Thirty public enterprises led the list of the largest advertisers on private television (Bohmann, (1997), p.190).

⁷¹ "Inversión publicitaria en 1995", in *El universo de la radio*, México City, Vol.1, n.2, Summer 1995, p.69.

⁷² Table of publicity expenditures in Mexico elaborated by the *Asociación Mexicana de Agencias de Publicidad*.

competitiveness, efficiency, integration and the like by the late 1980s. Even the PRI, with its corporatist structure, resulted more as “a barrier to modernisation” than a true aid (except for the fact that the technocracy still required that party pass reforms in Congress and act as an electoral tool to organise popular sectors).

The premise of the new model was simple: a small, but highly efficient government that could set the conditions for the private world to flourish and maintain economic growth. These attitudes were in accordance with the kind of social and economic expectations shared not only by a large number of urban middle sectors, but obviously also by the entrepreneurs. The backing of these sectors to the Salinas’ project of modernisation became evident in the mid-term elections of 1991 in which the PRI recovered from the relative loss it suffered in 1988.

Nevertheless it must be emphasised that it was not support to the PRI and to what it traditionally symbolised (corporatism, pork-barrel politics, expanded bureaucracy, and, as a result, inefficiency), but to President Salinas and his new policies. The urban and modern social sector’s sympathies were directed more to the president –since it was clear that he was still the key figure in the political structure—, and less and less to the old corporatist regime. The high level of popularity of Salinas, 72 percent, is shown on the survey that the newspaper *Reforma* carried out in the main urban centres of Mexico and published in October 30th 1994.

After years of populism and of “anti-entrepreneurial” discourses, the new ruling elite was openly and plainly supportive of the interests of the private businesses and capital. Therefore, if during previous decades there were few other real political alternatives to which to turn to for the big entrepreneurial groups, now that opposition was growing, it became unnecessary since the old regime apparatus was now led by a technocracy convinced of the benefits of economic liberalisation, of entrepreneurial values, and of the importance of private capital as the main locus for development. There was no need to change the formula by looking at opposition forces and parties. An example of this support to the Salinas’ project (and to the continuation of that project as represented by his successor, Ernesto Zedillo) were the declarations of the *Asociación Mexicana de Bancos*, (one of the top entrepreneurial organisations) one week before the 1994 elections who

stated that, "if Zedillo does not win the elections, instability would reign in the country".⁷³

More than a declaration, this was a clear warning from the bankers.

Television entrepreneurs were not alien to this sentiment and, therefore, though there had been changes in the political arena, television remained still loyal to the presidential figure—and only secondarily and indirectly to the PRI—who was still the most important factor in Mexican political life, the one who could still decide to whom the benefits and favours could be granted. An excellent example of this was Salinas decision to give what would be the last "big" TV concession to Televisa in 1994 (Radiotelevisora de México Norte) for \$ 295, 198,777 Mexican Pesos (equivalent to USD \$ 80 million at that time).⁷⁴ In turn, the chairman of Televisa, made it very clear that his support lay with President Salinas ("I'm a Soldier of the President"), instead of declaring his support to the PRI as in previous occasions.⁷⁵

Therefore, the political liberalisation process that started in Mexico in the late 1970s was not reflected on television screens in 1994. Moreover, in spite of the creation of a nationwide public television network, these decades saw the transformation of Televisa as a virtual communications office of the government on domestic political affairs and as a quite impressive public relations agency for the promotion of the presidential image. This was the outcome of the mutual support that Televisa had exchanged with the regime since the 1970s and the joint interests that had started to appear more explicitly by the end of the 1980s—a time when opposition parties began to grow and strengthen in Mexico. However, there was no space for these alternative political voices on the television screens. The political liberalisation process that was being experienced in Mexico, and the growth of opposition parties, had thus only created the necessary conditions, but it was not sufficient for generating more plural and open television, as can be seen during the 1994 electoral process. Other forms of change—of an economic and financial nature—within the specific context of television were required to launch television into openness.

⁷³ *La Jornada*, August 13th 1994, front page.

⁷⁴ This payment was based upon Article 110 of the Law of General Communication that enables the federal government to participate in the income of all communication enterprises when using the concessions received. This prerogative of the government had not been used before.

⁷⁵ In *Reforma*, May 15th 1995.

Chapter Five

The Initial Transition of Radio in Mexico, 1980s-1994

During the late 1980s some stations began to adapt new formats on radio programming, especially talk-radio news broadcasts where journalists were hired as newscasters and began to editorialise the news. Slowly, and at times still erratically, these changes in format gave way to more important changes in the contents of the news broadcasts in the early 1990s. A slight openness could be found on the radio in the presentation of news, especially at election time. The presentation of the news on those programmes moved at times towards the boundary of the regime's tolerance of what could be presented in the media, and censorship measures were not infrequent when such boundaries were considered to be trespassed. Censorship ranged from "friendly" recommendations to modify the formats to more explicit demands for removing critical newscasters and journalists from the programmes.

Though such changes were still rare, it was possible to note already a process of openness on the radio that was unthinkable on television in those years. What are the motives that moved the radio towards a more independent and open presentation of political information? This chapter shows that those first steps towards independence and openness that could already be noted by the early 1990s on the radio and had their roots in two important changes that occurred during the previous decade: on the one hand, the wider adoption of innovative forms of broadcasting based on talk-radio *formats* (including the positive reaction that the people developed towards those programmes). These new changes in the formats were introduced at first by AM stations at a time when audiences began to prefer FM stations for music broadcastings. On the other hand, those initial changes in the formats slowly began to give way to changes—still rare and erratic—in the *contents* as well. Though the "discovery" that the concessionaires made of the need of the people for having some space in which they could participate and from which they could get some alternative information, (at a time when television was totally closed) is important for further openness. Here I sustain that a better explanation is found on the competition among a growing number of stations within a stagnant publicity market, in a situation of continuous

economic instability and frequent crises (1982-1994). Before discussing these hypotheses, I would like to present a brief sketch of the situation of the radio in Mexico before the 1980s, noting some of its main characteristics.

-----0-----

In 1970 there were 603 radio stations in Mexico, of which 579 were classified as commercial radio stations and the other 24 as cultural or public stations. By 1994 there were 1,214 radio stations, of which 1,068 were commercial and 146 were classified as cultural or public.¹ Contrary to television, where the limits of “what and how” to say things were defined for many years by one dominant private corporation through a decisively supportive policy towards the government, the limits on radio became more diffuse, since there were too many stations in quite different financial, regional and political situations in relation to the centre of power, symbolised by Mexico City.² But what was the usual content of the radio transmissions?

During the 1920s and 1930s the programmes transmitted on the radio were direct and broadcast live. However, the high costs of production plus the technological advances made it more profitable for small stations to replace such programming with recorded programmes from Mexico City’s larger stations, such as the XEW and the XEQ. Recorded programmes acquired from Mexico City’s stations were also the only way for small provincial stations to have the opportunity to present some elaborate programmes or special shows hosted by well known presenters who invited famous singers and artists. Thus at the end of the 1950s, the production of live programmes was a business in which only the largest stations could profitably compete. Recorded programming became the dominant

¹ The figures are taken from the Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes, Dirección de Normas y Sistemas de Difusión, *Informe de labores, 1989-1994*, and from the reports of the CIRT. In many cases, the figures of the Secretariat of Communications do not coincide with the ones provided and published by the Chamber.

² Though the heterogeneity of the radio in Mexico is quite notorious, since many important regions developed important radio groups that at times not only opposed to the radio policies elaborated by the large radio entrepreneurs from Mexico City, but also to certain governmental policies, this chapter only concentrates on the largest national radio groups that for practical purposes dictated and shaped the “radio policies” to be followed by most of the other small local radio concessionaires. For an interesting account on the position of some local radio broadcasters in relation to the “central radio power” as represented by Mexico City, see Fernandez Christlieb, (1997).

format on radio broadcasts in the country during the following decades and the production of live original material became exceptional.³

But not all the recorded programmes came from the larger stations. Many stations reduced their operations costs even further by replacing the recorded programmes bought from larger stations with recorded music bought in the market. Soon the large majority of radio stations –both large and small—opted to base their programming on recorded music broadcastings, thus reducing their personnel and their expenditures to the minimum. This sort of broadcasting was called “the California System”, where the broadcasters function was purely to present the melodies and songs followed by commercial breaks. With such an arrangement, many of the owners of these small stations limited themselves to collecting their revenue without doing much more. However, since the best quality music programmes were still those transmitted from Mexico City’s stations, many small entrepreneurs with one or two stations found it lucrative to merge with radio networks –also dominated by Mexico City’s stations—that could provide them with both complete programming and advertising.

The merging of stations into networks homogenised the programming and concentrated the operation of the stations –though not the possession of the federal concessions—in very few hands. Groups such as RUMSA of Manuel Guillemont, Radio Programas de México of Clemente Serna, Radiodifusoras Asociadas, S.A. of José Laris Iturbe, Grupo ACIR of Francisco Ibarra, or Radio Cadena Nacional of Rafael Cutberto Navarro controlled more than 60 percent of the radio stations. Thus, by the 1970s the large majority of radio stations were part of larger networks and the programming they transmitted was based essentially on recorded musical broadcasts.

This does not mean that the presentation of information was alien to Mexican radio. In fact news broadcasts have been transmitted on the radio since the late 1920s. The traditional formats of these news broadcasts consisted of reading some news from the printed press without any further comment or editing. More than being programmes, these news broadcasts were brief reports of no longer than fifteen minutes. Nevertheless, it was 1959 when the first important “revolution” within radio news broadcasts took place. The XEOY-Radio Mil station made a new style of radio presentation popular when it inaugurated the

³ Mejía Barquera, (1999 a), p. 9.

fifteen-minutes news programme “Radio Mil-Carta Blanca”, (later known as “Primera Plana”), in December of that year. It was transmitted twice daily, at 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. from Monday to Friday (and at 8:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, Sunday and holidays). Though the information presented on that broadcast was still taken from the newspapers –as was the norm during those years—it added four innovative changes: it hired its own reporters to gather information, it adapted a brief format for presenting news resumes that could be repeated all day, it also opened, when required, a section to present special transmissions, like the President’s speech before Congress every September, and finally, it arranged agreements with important international press agencies in order to receive bulletins on foreign affairs.⁴

Nevertheless, it was the first and second innovation that gave Radio Mil greater prestige among other radio stations and groups: for the first time reporters were sent to different parts of the city “to report the news on the spot”. Radio Mil also assigned a permanent reporter to cover information directly related to the presidency, and moreover, it eventually sent journalists to cover important international events like the Vietnam War. This provided Radio Mil’s news broadcast a quick response to events and news.

In 1967 the already constituted Núcleo Radio Mil, as the corporate group was registered, decided to create the internal News Division of which “Primera Plana” remained as the pillar programme. The frequency of news reports was increased in all the stations of the group. These fifteen-minute transmissions started at 6:45 and were repeated every hour during the day until 24:45 in all the stations of the group (XEBS, XEOY, XEUR, XECO and XEPH).⁵ The main characteristics of this news format were:

- The importance given to the quantitative aspect of news presented, i.e. the number of news items as a synonym of quality of information.
- The diversity of news transmitted, which tended to be presented in very brief slots, information regarding both domestic and international events originating in politics, economics, and the social or cultural spheres.

⁴ The international press agencies that provided the Mexican radio stations with news were: United Press International (UPI), Associated Press (AP), Agence France Press (AFP) and Latin Reuters. There were also two Mexican press agencies, INFORMEX and the public NOTIMEX.

⁵ Gabriel Sosa Plata and Alberto Esquivel, *Las mil y una radios. Una historia, un análisis actual de la radiodifusión mexicana*, Mexico City, McGraw-Hill, 1997, p.237.

- The presentation of information without any proper explanation of the context and circumstances in which it originated. In this sense, the news broadcasts were only accounts and collections of “noticeable” facts without context.

This innovative model of Núcleo Radio Mil –the quick, plain and brief reading of news repeated every hour during the day—consolidated between 1970 and 1985 as the pattern to be followed by other radio news broadcasts, like those of Grupo ACIR, Organización Radio Centro and RPM. Almost three out of four stations inaugurated a news broadcast shaped along those lines. In spite of this, the time devoted to news broadcasting still remained low in comparison to that dedicated to entertainment programmes. According to a 1984 study of 574 radio stations on the AM band in all the 32 states of Mexico, three quarters of them transmitted on average eight news broadcasts per day, with an average time of transmission of 7.5 minutes each.⁶ This means that the stations devoted 58 minutes and 40 seconds a day to the transmission of news broadcasts, which is very low if one compares it with the time devoted to musical programmes (7.5 hours a day) or quiz shows (2.5 hours a day).⁷ In this way, by the beginning of the 1980s radio broadcast time in Mexico was devoted far more to music programmes, and the transmission of information, on the other hand was presented through brief, plain and heterogeneous collection of news reports, repeated throughout the day.

However, after the mid-1980s these ways of producing radio shows in Mexico were modified yet again. The reasons were, on the one hand, the wider adoption of innovative forms of broadcasting based on talk-radio formats, and also the positive reaction of the people to those programmes. These new changes in the formats were introduced at first by AM stations at a time when audiences began to prefer FM stations for music broadcastings. On the other hand, those initial changes in the formats slowly began to give way to changes in the contents as well. This change has to do not only with the “discovery” that the

⁶ Serafina Llano and Óscar Morales, *La radiodifusión en México*, Mexico City, Comunicación. Tecnología e Investigación, S.C., 1984, p.151.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p.154. According to the same study, three quarters of the stations in 1984 did not transmit any programme of debates or comments on public matters, and those who did transmit them devoted on average 48 minutes a day to such programmes. Nevertheless, the transmission of news broadcasts was economically profitable since the insertion of ads during their transmission had usually an additional cost of thirty percent on the regular price (Alma Rosa Alva de la Selva, *Radio e ideología*. Third edition, Mexico City. Ed. El

concessionaires made of the need of the people to have some spaces in which to be heard and from which they could get some alternative information, (at a time when television was totally closed), but most importantly to the competition among a growing number of stations in a decreasing publicity market.

A change in the formats

The displacement of AM stations by FM stations caused by the preferences of the audiences for music broadcastings, is crucial for understanding the adoption of talk-radio formats on the AM band stations. Until the late 1960s the development of FM radio was still very poor and not very popular, since very few radios had the capacity to receive its frequency, and the ones that could were much more expensive.⁸ The slow growth in the number of FM stations contrasted with the rapid growth of AM stations in those same years (Table 5.1). Consequently, the announcers were not very interested in investing money therein.⁹ This was problematic for the FM radio concessionaires, who then decided to launch a strong campaign to promote that frequency.

Caballito, 1986, p.88). This was all the more profitable if one takes into account that almost the same news report was presented on air again and again throughout the day.

⁸ At the beginning of the 1950s the FM frequency band was inaugurated for commercial purposes. This band transmits today between 88 and 108 Megahertz (AM band was located between 535 and 1605 Kilohertz, but at the end of the 1980s it was expanded up to the 1705 Kilohertz). Though the quality of the sound transmission is much better than that of the AM band, for many years the FM band was not very popular. In May 1952 the first FM radio station in Mexico City, XHFM Radio Joya, began operations. Shortly afterwards, there appeared some other FM stations such as XEOY-FM, of Radio Mil (1957), XET FM in Monterrey (1957), XEQ-FM of Mr. Azcárraga (1957), XERPM-FM, of RPM (1959) and XEHMLS-FM in Matamoros (1960).

⁹ Fernando Mejía Barquera, *La industria de la radio y la televisión y la política del Estado mexicano*, Thesis, FCPyS, UNAM, Mexico City, 1982, p.701.

Table 5.1
Growth of AM and FM Commercial Radio Stations, 1960-1969

Year	AM Band	FM Band	Total*
1960	352	10	369
1961	370	10	398
1962	389	14	424
1963	401	19	442
1964	441	25	488
1965	450	27	501
1966	458	31	513
1967	476	35	535
1968	486	41	551
1969	505	49	579

* This figure considers also short wave commercial stations

Source: Secretariat of Communications and Transports, General Direction of Concessions and Permissions, Department of Statistics, Yearbook, 1970.

In May 1970 the Association of FM Radio Broadcasters was created out of the initiative of Joaquín Vargas (owner of Stereo Rey), Francisco Sánchez Campuzano (owner of Estereo Mil) and Salvador Arreguin (owner of Radio Imagen), amongst others. The aim of the Association was to convince the announcers to advertise on these stations in order to popularise the frequency. They argued that the FM band permitted clearer sound quality transmissions, which was better for music and concerts. At the same time, they negotiated a reduction on the prices of AM-FM radios with the retailers.

These efforts finally developed into positive outcomes, since between 1969 and 1982 the number of FM stations increased from 49 to 176, but the total number of commercial adverts transmitted on this frequency almost matched the number of adverts on AM, in spite of having more than three times the number of stations (624). Moreover, despite the fact that in 1980 Mexico City audiences preferred AM stations by a ratio of almost 4:1 (77 percent against 23percent) over FM stations, by 1985, only five years later, these preferences had almost reversed: 35.1% still preferred AM, while 64.9% went for FM.¹⁰

¹⁰ Data taken from the monthly reports elaborated by the International Research de México, S.A. on audiences on broadcasting media. The data of 1980 correspond to the average audiences of FM and AM stations reported in: *Mediometro Radio. Ciudad de México*, INRA, January to December 1980. And the data of 1985

As said before, the dominant programming on Mexican radio was (and still is today) music broadcastings. A reason for the rapid growth in the popularity of the FM was that the audiences, (and the announcers, of course) soon noted the higher quality of the stereophonic sound—simultaneous transmission on two channels—which was more suitable for music programming at a time when technology in radio devices not only reduced the costs of the sets equipped with FM band, but also created a new generation of radio gadgets like the “Walkman”, and more sophisticated home and car stereos.

In brief, technological advances reduced the prices and made the acquisition of FM and double band radio sets more accessible, which created a better quality of audio for similar prices to AM radio sets. The 1980s witnessed the explosive growth of FM radio stations which concentrated their programming on music (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2
Growth of AM and FM Commercial Stations, 1984-1994

Year	AM Band	FM Band	Total*
1984	634	183	837
1985	636	185	839
1986	645	189	852
1987	653	195	866
1988	654	197	869
1989	673	214	898
1990	690	249	950
1991	700	267	974
1992	705	294	1006
1993	717	314	1037
1994	729	334	1068

* This figure includes commercial short wave stations.

Source: Secretariat of Communications and Transports, General Direction of Norms and Communications Control, Office of Statistics and Information, Yearbook 1995.

correspond also to the average audiences reported on FM and AM stations in Mexico City in: *Mediometro Radio. Ciudad de México*, INRA, January to December 1985. These data were provided by Luis Mercader, General Director of INRA de México, S.A. de C.V.

The preferences of the audiences and, obviously, of the announcers and publicity agencies for FM, at least in the urban centres, seriously challenged the AM stations. They could not maintain the same programming offer as FM radio stations since it became evident that at equal prices people would prefer to have quality sound to enjoy musical transmissions. The audiences' preference for FM was followed by that of the announcers'. Therefore, some stations started to innovate the formats of their programming and the kind of transmissions they presented. If they could not compete with music, they could certainly explore the possibility of presenting attractive transmissions that did not require high audio quality. One option that proved to be successful was talk-radio.

Many AM stations started to adapt different kinds of live transmissions that already existed on the radio, but that were still marginal. The contents of such programmes ranged from housekeeping to football, and many of them opened their phone lines to audience participation. People started to react positively to these changes in formats, since they were eager to have spaces where in they could feel they were being listened to and in which they too could have a voice. For instance, an individual who called up a programme in which the discussion dealt with education, might very well end up complaining about government corruption and inefficiency.¹¹ In a country with a very low level of readership (see Chapter One) and at a time when television was completely closed to any alternative voice and for any form of audience participation, these few spaces on the radio were very important, and the people responded with enthusiasm. These forms of transmissions became so popular that by 1990 AM band stations had recovered 44,5 percent of the audiences in Mexico City.¹²

Of course, most of these programmes dealt with aspects of daily life and topics that could not be easily linked to broader discussions on politics or public life. However, there were a few other programmes whose subjects could be turned into more political issues. Many of these kinds of programmes, with their growing popularity, found it more and more difficult to remain on air. This was the case, for instance, with the programmes hosted and conducted by the journalists Francisco Huerta, who has had experience on these kind of

¹¹ Interview with Roberto Ordorica, February 2001, State of Mexico.

¹² *Mediometro Radio. Ciudad de México*, INRA, January to December 1990.

talk-radio programmes since the late 1970s with a programme called "Public Opinion" –a programme that was finally banned in 1982.¹³

After the closedown of "Public Opinion" he returned to the radio at the beginning of the administration of President De la Madrid. The new programme was called "Public Voice" (*Voz pública*) and kept the talk radio format. However, the condition that XEX Radio (of Televisa) put to Huerta for broadcasting was to previously record the programmes –in order to have a better control over its content—and to avoid live broadcasting. Even this much more controlled format resulted to be "excessive for the President's taste" and it was censored as well. Huerta's final work on radio began in 1984 with the programme "Guilty

¹³ In September 1976 he launched a quite innovative radio programme called "Public Opinion" (*Opinión pública*) on ABC Radio property of the entrepreneur Carlos Ferráez. His original idea was to make a programme which could offer a space for the people to call and discuss matters related to market consumption of diverse goods and services, so the consumers could express their opinion about the quality, the price, the advantages or disadvantages about different items. However, the people started to call to complain about the government and to show their irritation against President Echeverría due to the recent devaluation of the currency (August 30th 1976) after more than two decades of exchange rate stability.

The first pressure to cancel the programme came from the Radio and Television Industry Workers Union (STIRT). Its Secretary General, Nezahualcóyotl De la Vega (who shortly after became a PRI federal deputy) started to complain about Huerta's conduction of the programme and argued that the journalist was not a member of the union and, therefore, he needed a "permission letter" to continue with his work before the microphones. Naturally, the letter depended on De la Vega's good will. After some time Huerta finally obtained it due to the intervention of Ferráez, who as all concessionaires had to offer certain benefits to the union –like regular monetary contributions or working posts to individuals who, independently of their ability, were "recommended" from its leaders—in order to avoid problems with it. Besides, Huerta had to regularly pay to the union a fee "for occupying the post that should be given to a union member".

The programme's popularity grew and also the pressures over it, but Ferráez decided to maintain it due to the financial difficulties of the station, which had gone into bankruptcy. Between 1977 and 1978, Mexico City's Major, Carlos Hank González, was implementing a huge urban project in order to open wider streets and avenues in the city. This project was carried out with little consideration for the neighbourhoods' urban characteristics and without the possibility for their inhabitants to do anything about it. "Public Opinion" became a sort of forum for complaints and the government's pressure increased to prevent any further airing of the spaces for citizens' opinions. Huerta recalls one occasion when "a certain guy named Riva Palacio, who was a collaborator of Hank González", called to the station and said to the manager: "Tell that bastard.

Huerta, to stop it, because he cannot keep on doing this to the Professor" –as Hank González was known (Francisco Huerta, *Crónica del periodismo civil. La voz del ciudadano*, Mexico City, Grijalbo, 1997, p115). The threats continued and at the beginning of 1982 a new Chief of Social Communication of the Presidency entered office, Francisco Galindo Ochoa, a person known by his intolerance towards the media and famous in the journalistic circles for "having the money on one hand and a gun on the other" (*Ibid.*, p.128).

Galindo Ochoa exercised more pressure over the programme than anyone else, and in a concerted effort with De la Vega decided to close down the programme definitively in August 1982. On the 20th of that month two union bodyguards prevented Huerta from entering the station. Soon afterwards the station was sold to Mario Vázquez Raña, a close friend of Echeverría and the president of the Mexican Olympic Committee for more than twenty years. Huerta visited him in order to see if his programme could be restored and the answer was clear: "You will not return to the radio, Mr. Huerta; your programme was highly unpleasant for Mr. President and he told me so. So, you'd better stop thinking of coming back" (*Ibid.*, p.131).

The complete narration of the story can be consulted in Francisco Huerta, *Mordaza a la opinión pública*, Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1986; along with his interview by Leticia Singer in her book *Mordaza de papel*, Mexico City, Ed. El Caballito, 1993.

or Innocent?" that discussed the state of justice in Mexico, the condition of the prisoners, the practice of torture by the police, and the various irregularities that usually accompanied the implementation of legal procedures. Threats and warnings started immediately, but the programme survived for some years. In 1990, when "the programme was having important audience figures and the station started to receive telephone calls from Human Rights NGOs, Francisco Huerta was definitively vetoed from the Mexican radio".¹⁴

Experiences such as this made the radio in the 1980s a relatively more dynamic and innovative electronic media than TV, though not necessarily because the radio wanted to become a space for political freedom, but because these few spaces had never existed before on radio. The existence of these spaces was not the conscious outcome of the concessionaires convictions, but only the timid and cautious attempts of some entrepreneurs who wanted to raise the ratings and who hoped that the large number of radio stations would help them to be less vulnerable to censorship than other forms of media.

The adoption of talk-radio formats was later extended to the news broadcasts. Actually, a successful pioneer in these kind of transmissions was the news transmission of Radio Programas de México (RPM), *Monitor*, conducted by the journalist José Gutiérrez Vivó. The *Monitor* news project started in 1973 initiated by a group of people among which there was Roberto Ordorica, who became the General Manager of the station XERED that later transmitted the news broadcast.¹⁵ According to Ordorica two important things must be taken into account for explaining the increasing importance of *Monitor* during the 1970s

¹⁴ Singer (1993), p.128.

¹⁵ In 1973 RPM acquired some radio stations from Radio Cadena Nacional (RCN) belonging to Rafael Cutberto Navarro, among which there was XERCN, a station located in Mexico City, and shortly afterwards renamed XERED. The idea of Ordorica, who became the manager of the station, and of its collaborators was to develop a talk radio similar to the one of Radio VIP, a station with a permission to transmit in English. However, XERED was to transmit in Spanish and its transmissions were to be re-transmitted in other stations in the provinces. The news broadcasts was called *Monitor*. It started its transmissions in 1974. Jose Gutiérrez Vivó—who had worked in Radio VIP—replaced Mario Iván Martínez as newscaster. *Monitor* was transmitted three times a day with a duration of between 1 ½-2 hours.

By the end of the 1970s Radio VIP was moved from the AM band to the FM band in order to activate a concession given by the government on the 88.1 MHz. In the 1980s Radio VIP changed its name into XHRED-FM and transmitted *Monitor* on FM. At that time Gutiérrez Vivó adopted another innovation on the news broadcast: he started to travel with some other journalists and reporters to present his programme live from different countries. While broadcasting *Monitor* he would also tell the audiences about the costumes, the art, the ways of life of other countries and peoples. This feature offered *Monitor's* audiences a surplus of information that other news broadcasts did not have (Interview with Roberto Ordorica, actual owner and Director General of the radio station "La 'I' de Ixtapan" [14000 khz] of Ixtapan de la Sal, State of Mexico, on February 2001).

and 1980s: Firstly, the high professional standards attained by the broadcast's personnel.¹⁶ Key to this was the policy of its newscaster to always refuse to use those spaces for supporting politicians and to never accepting any sort of "gifts and other compensations" from them. Though Gutiérrez Vivó was never radical, he nevertheless maintained a honest attitude to his work by not entering into dealings with interests alien to journalism, which made criticisms of the government appear to be founded on purely professional grounds. On the other hand, the fact that it was the first radio station to invest a huge amount of money in its facilities, news services and buildings, served also to give prestige to the station and make it attractive for politicians and important business people to accept the invitations to the studios.¹⁷

But if *Monitor* was the most successful model on talk-radio formats for news broadcasts, a further incentive for the adoption of such a model was provided by the dramatic situation caused by the September 1985 Earthquake in Mexico City. At 7:20 on the morning of September 19th 1985 an earthquake reaching 8.1 degrees on the Richter Scale shook Mexico City, causing one of the most devastating tragedies in the history of the country.¹⁸ Though in general terms the media were basically under-prepared both in resources and in technology to face such an event, the radio reacted quickly, opening its spaces for the transmission of information about the situation in the city and organising the collection of aid, resources, clothes, medicines, and food. The radio helped to keep a constant communication with the rest of the country.¹⁹ Radio stations kept their airwaves open for

¹⁶ The managers and news personnel of *Monitor* were constantly travelling to American and Canadian cities to learn and adopt the latest developments on talk-radio broadcasting.

¹⁷ The original studios of XERED were located in the Plaza de la República in Mexico City. Then they were moved to Reforma Avenue along with the headquarters of Radio VIP. However, the small space that the two stations shared was considered to be at odds with the development of a modern radio station. Therefore in 1980-1 there were inaugurated the new studio of XERED in the southern neighbourhood of San Jerónimo. There was the explicit intention of making of the facilities of the San Jerónimo studios the most impressive and modern ones that any radio station had (from satellite communications and helicopters ports to powerful electric transmitters). These facilities contrasted greatly with the usual "small cabin concept" of the radio in Mexico. With such facilities, the news broadcast started to extend invitations to top level entrepreneurs and politicians, including the president, for being interviewed live on the studios, something that they very seldom accepted. All this made of *Monitor* the most important news broadcast by the mid-1980s, and its long transmission live format became the model of many other news broadcasts on the radio.

¹⁸ The earthquake had a duration of 120 seconds and its effects caused more than 10 thousand casualties, 5,500 disappeared persons, 7,000 wounded persons, serious damages in 6,000 buildings and houses, 137 schools, 11 hospitals and 97 theatres. More than 35 thousand people could not return to their houses and flats, around 100 thousand persons lost their employment and more than 6 million inhabitants could not be provided with water and 4 million with electricity. The damage was calculated in US \$ 5,000 million.

¹⁹ Sosa Plata and Esquivel (1997), p.244.

those citizens who wanted to communicate with their relatives, for the authorities to give messages related to public security and health measures, and for channelling various aid efforts to the places where they were required. Many stations, like those of Núcleo Radio Mil, the XEW of Televisa, and Radio Red of RPM maintained an almost continued social service transmission throughout the 19th and 20th of September. As one scholar notices,

From those moments on [the earthquake], the surviving media... reacted and radically altered, for some days, their tendencies and the logic of production of the traditional mass culture of Mexico City's Valley. There was no time for waiting for international aid, nor to carefully design a meditated project of information transmission, and therefore, under such radical circumstances the mass media improvised a disordered and, at times contradictory, but useful programme of social help... A social project abruptly emerged on the media and drastically buried the other cultural logic [based on capital accumulation, consciousness atomisation and reality dissimulation] that only half an hour before they were promoting. The media recovered the only sense through which they can be justified in the country: their high social character.²⁰

The impact of the earthquake on the radio was shocking and it helped to give a very important impulse for adopting the *Monitor* model for other news broadcasts, since it was discovered that long live transmissions could be attractive if the adequate format was adopted. Longer news broadcasts were definitively included on radio. Some radio organisations, like Radio Mil and ACIR started to produce news broadcasts of half an hour. The old readership of news was complemented with special reports on specific topics, interviews with public figures and editorial comments on news, which became a highly important part of the broadcasts.²¹ All these changes are condensed in the words of two experts,

For many, radio was "re-discovered" from those moments. It realised that, contrary to television, it could provide a more efficient service during these kind of events and it could offer a more complete information coverage. But these changes were not for free, since the concessionaires knew that only with a change of this nature they would have larger audiences and would face the competition of other information technologies that had been rapidly growing in the last years. To take advantage of such situation was the disjunctive, and they did it.

The long duration news broadcasts started then to emerge in Mexico City's radio stations and competition between them took place. The amount of resources invested and spent was enormous: cell phones, cars and motorbikes, helicopters, computers and the use of satellite communications

²⁰ Javier Esteinou Madrid, "Los medios de comunicación y los terremotos de 1985", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, no.8, November-December 1989, p.34.

²¹ Though these formats were firstly introduced by the news broadcast *Monitor* in Radio Red, part of Radio Programas de México (which belongs to Clemente Serna), since the mid-1970s, their popularisation only began after the second half of the 1980s.

technology. At the same time, many well-known television journalists and anchormen were hired, who were supported by larger of editors, reporters and domestic and foreign press correspondents.²²

The adoption of long talk-radio formats on the news broadcasts proved successful as reflected in the increasing advertising tariffs in these programmes. For instance, in 1988 Radio Mil charged an additional 40 percent more than the regular tariffs for inserting ads just "before, after or during news broadcasts or other special events" and ACIR charged an additional 30 percent for ads during news broadcast time.²³ RPM charged a substantial amount for ads in *Monitor*. The regular tariff for a 10 second advert transmitted for five days in regular programming cost \$ 28,000 Mexican Pesos, but the equivalent 10 second spot in *Monitor* was raised to \$ 92,000 Mexican Pesos time.²⁴

However, one should not confuse these profitable and attractive changes in the formats with the more open contents of the news broadcasts. These innovations in the way of presenting the news did not necessarily mean that such information was more complete, unbiased and relatively objective on domestic political affairs. In October 1986 José Luis Gutiérrez Espindola and María P. Lobato carried out a content study on the six most important news broadcasts in Mexico City, all of which were produced by some of the largest national radio networks and were transmitted beyond the capital city.²⁵ The period studied was between October 13th and 17th, 1986, and the news broadcasts selected were:

- Notisistema, from 20:00 to 20:16 hours. A news service transmitted in different stations in Mexico City.
- Noticentro of Organización Radio Centro, from 21:00 to 21:14 hours.
- Nucleonoticias of Núcleo Radio Mil, from 21:00 to 21:30 hours.
- Radiocomunicación Humana of Grupo ACIR, from 21:30 to 22:00 hours.
- Monitor of Radio Red, which was part of Radio Programas de México, from 18:00 to 19:30 hours.
- Radio Educación, from 21:30 to 22:00 hours. This is a public radio station operated by the IMER and transmitted through more than 10 universities' radio stations nationwide.

²² Sosa Plata and Esquivel (1997), p.245.

²³ *Medios Audio-Visuales*, No. 118-2. Mexico City: Medios Publicitarios Mexicanos, S.A. de C.V., June 1988, pgs77 and 80-84.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.80.

The following Table 5.3 shows the time and average length of notes transmitted in the six news broadcasts considered in the study.

Table 5.3
Time and Average Duration of News Transmitted on Six News Broadcasts, October 13th-October 17th 1986

News broadcasts	Total duration of news broadcasts	Average of notes presented at the initial resume	Average of news presented by edition	Average of time per note presented
Radio Comunicación Humana ACIR	30 minutes	8	36	50 seconds
Nucleonoticias NRM	30 minutes	8	24	74 seconds
Radio Educación	30 minutes	7	30	60 seconds
Noticentro	14 minutes	4	25	34 seconds
Notisistema	16 minutes	5	17	57 seconds
Monitor	90 minutes	6	21	257 seconds

Source: Espindola and Lobato (1989), p.159.

The news broadcast that devoted more time to each note was *Monitor*. Four other news broadcasts had specific editorial sections, ACIR, NRM, Radio Educación and Noticentro. In each of them the average time of the editorials is between one and a half and two minutes, and the topics of these comments are usually quite general ranging from domestic to international politics and economics. As for the subjects treated in these broadcasts, the study divides them into four categories: news from Mexico City, news from the states of Mexico, worldwide news that affects Mexico, and other international news (Table 5.4). Radio Educación present most of its information on political and economic issues, both domestic and international. On international issues it devotes more coverage to news originating in other Latin American countries and the overall tone, of this news, is decisively anti-imperialist and sympathises with Left-wing approaches. Notisistema gives preference to sports news, which comprises 40 percent of its information material, followed by news from Mexico City and international news. Noticentro, ACIR and NRM gives importance to news from Mexico City and to international information, though the sport

²⁵ J.L. Gutiérrez Espindola and M.P. Lobato, "Información radiofónica: el mundo en tres minutos", in María Antonieta Rebeil Corella, Alma Rosa Alva de la Selva and Ignacio Rodríguez Zárate (coords.), *Perfiles del*

section is quite relevant in these transmissions. Monitor is one station that places more importance than the other stations on Mexico City news, disproportionately followed by international information.

Table 5.4
News Topics on Each News Broadcast

News broadcasts	News from Mexico City	News from other states	Foreign news with impact on Mexico	International news	Average of notes by edition
Radio Comunicación Humana ACIR	17	2	2	9	36
Nucleonoticias NRM	13	2	1	4	24
Radio Educación	10	3	3	14	30
Noticentro	10	1	2	5	25
Notisistema	6	1	1	3	17
Monitor	14	1	1	3	21

Source: Espíndola and Lobato (1989), p.159.

The content of the news presented in these broadcasts was characterised, according to the study, by the following aspects. *Discontinuity*, since the information broadcasted did not present the tracking of processes, but only limited itself to giving "an account of actual noticeable facts". *Dispersion*, since even the information presented resulted as being fragmentary and partial about the facts. *Excessive centralisation*, since most of the news transmitted originated in Mexico City. In this sense, it is important to notice the almost total absence of news from the rest of the country. And finally, the information provided on domestic political and economic matters, tended to be *highly supportive of governmental official positions* and, paradoxically, (except for Radio Educación), political opposition organisations were practically excluded, which showed a low level of pluralism in these news broadcasts.²⁶

In this way, while in the 1980s there began an important change in radio broadcasting formats, which at times opened spaces for audience participation and began to present information in newer and more innovative forms, the contents of the majority of these

cuadrante. *Experiencias de la radio*, Mexico City, Ed. Trillas, 1989.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.162.

programmes —especially the news broadcasts—remained nonetheless behind the informational needs of a modern society. Although, the formats were highly innovative, the contents of many news broadcasts were still restricted on certain matters. One reason for this, as will be shown below, was that whenever these programmes dared to trespass the “accepted levels” of criticism, the response of the regime was to censor their contents or to veto certain newscasters. However, censorship would not be a sufficient obstacle to prevent a gradual openness with regard to contents, when strong economic motives of competition emerged, which were similar, though more critical, than those that had originally motivated the adoption of new formats.

The first steps towards content changes on the radio

In a country historically characterised for an extremely low level of readership, it was clear that the printed press was not going to become the place where the population would seek information. In Mexico City, perhaps the largest city in the world, there only around 400 thousand newspaper issues are sold per day.²⁷ Though it is very difficult to calculate the actual number of readers, since the newspapers very seldom declare their true circulation, it is possible to come to the conclusion that it must be very low in relation to the total population (see footnote 61 in Chapter One). The importance of the printed press lies in the fact that it has been the political and economic elite and the upper and educated middle classes who compose its regular readership; quantitatively low in number, but qualitatively a crucial population. This is why the printed press in Mexico, more than being a channel of transmission of news, has been a channel for mediating information and interests among important political and economic groups. This elitist character of the printed press leaves radio as the only popular and widespread media where people could find information.

In 1985, in Mexico City there were only 6 million radio sets in homes plus 2,7 million in cars.²⁸ It is calculated that radio's actual penetration reaches almost 90 percent of the

²⁷ Raúl Trejo Delarbre, *Ver, pero también leer*, Mexico City, Instituto Nacional del Consumidor, 1991, p.28.

²⁸ *Estudio de hábitos, sintonía de radio y consumo en el Distrito Federal*, Asociación de Radiodifusores del Distrito Federal, Mexico City, May 1985.

population in Mexico.²⁹ The audience of the news broadcasts reflects a plural social composition, since 35 percent of it is composed of what is called A/B Audience, i.e. upper and middle-upper classes; 29 percent is composed of C Audience, i.e. middle classes; and 36 percent is composed of D Audience, i.e. lower classes.³⁰ Under these circumstances it was not difficult to see why radio was the most popular form of media and the information that it transmitted was, if not necessarily more widely heard, at least more accessible to the majority of the population than that printed in the press.

As noted, some radio concessionaires discovered that talk-radio programmes could be a quite profitable business, but there were still many others who preferred a more cautious approach and kept themselves on good terms with the government officials in charge of supervising radio and TV transmissions. However, in contrast to television the radio offered certain spaces where some alternative information could be found. Though these spaces were evidently not in the majority on radio, the information presented on the 1988 electoral process shows more openness than the TV screens.

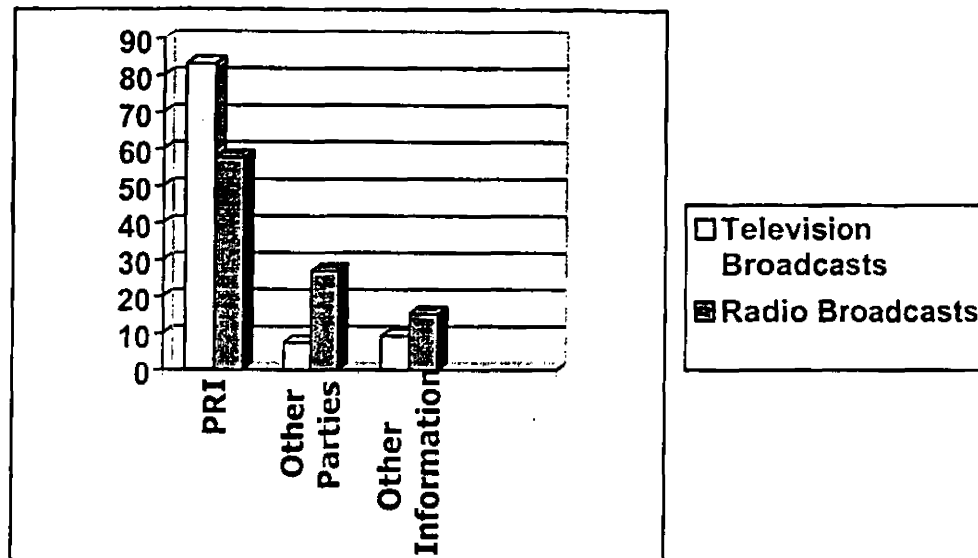
One of the extremely few studies on the role of the radio during the 1988 electoral campaigns is the one that the one time *Centro Internacional de Investigación Política y Desarrollo, A.C.* carried out between October 1987 and May 1988.³¹ A content analysis was made of the information provided by the most important news broadcasts in Mexico City: *Radio Comunicación Humana* of Grupo ACIR, *Monitor* of Radio Red-RPM, *Noticentro* of Organización Radio Centro, *Nucleonoticias* of Núcleo Radio Mil and the news broadcast of Radio Educación. Basically the same news broadcasts which served as the basis of the work of Gutiérrez Espíndola and Lobato Pérez, above mentioned. Although as mentioned, the radio concessionaires gave their support to Carlos Salinas, the spaces for opposition were greater and more accessible than on television (Figure 5.A).

²⁹ In 1995, there were calculated in México 15,218,821 homes with radios, which meant an audience of 76,687,163 inhabitants. In "La Radio Mexicana en Cifras", *El universo de la radio*, Vol.1, n.3, Fall, Mexico City, 1995, pgs.102-103.

³⁰ "Los públicos de la radio", in *El universo de la radio*, vol.3, n.4, Winter-Spring, Mexico City 1997, pgs.24-25, as reported by information provided by Nielsen, Co.

³¹ This work is cited by Sosa Plata and Esquivel (1997), pgs. 250-253.

Figure 5.A
Time for Candidates and Parties on Radio and TV News Broadcasts during the 1988
Electoral Campaign

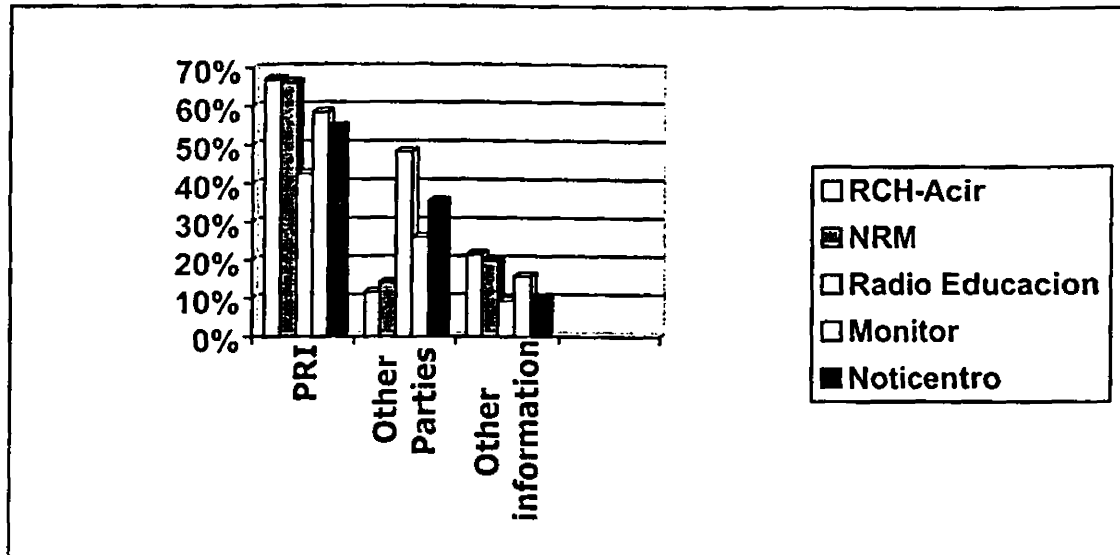


Source: For TV calculated with the data provided by Arredondo Ramirez (1990), pgs.61, 67, 71 and 72. And for radio, calculated with the data provided by the CIIPDAC.

According to the information presented on Chapter Four, the time that the TV news broadcasts *24 Horas* of Televisa and *Día a Día* of IMEVISION devoted to the PRI and its candidate during the electoral campaign was 83.14 percent of the total time that these broadcasts devoted to the presentation of information on the campaigns. In contrast, they only gave opposition parties 7.49 percent of this time, and with the remaining 9.37 percent they presented other information related to the campaigns, but not directly linked to the parties. There was no doubt about the complete support and promotion that television gave to the official party's candidate Carlos Salinas.

In one notorious contrast, the spaces devoted on radio broadcasts to information about the parties and their candidates in the 1988 electoral process were as follows: 57.72 percent for the PRI and its candidate, 27 percent for opposition parties and candidates and 15.28 percent for other electoral information not directly related to parties. There were more spaces available for opposition parties on the radio. Figure 5.B below shows the distribution of time given to the PRI and to other parties by each individual radio station.

Figure 5.B
Time for Candidates and Parties on Radio News Broadcast during the 1988 Electoral Campaign



Source: Data provided by the CIIPDAC.

It is noticeable that XEEP Radio Educación, a public radio station, devoted more time than the rest to information on opposition candidates and parties. This paradox is explained by the fact that this station in particular has been always linked to the National University, the UNAM and to other public universities of the states. Its audiences are mainly the students and academics of these universities, and its programming is mainly composed of cultural and educational material. Even XEEP's personnel is usually recruited from these universities and tends to sympathise with more progressive political positions. An example of this can be seen in the content of its news broadcasts, which in the study of Gutiérrez Espíndola and Lobato Pérez proved to be not only the one which gave more spaces to opposition groups, but was also the one which devoted more time to presenting news from Latin America and to assuming "anti-imperialists positions".³²

For the journalist Jorge Meléndez, the 1988 elections showed that there were some radio concessionaires who were pressed by the regime, others were simply afraid to open up their microphones to alternative voices, and there were still others who, through collusion with

interests alien to journalism, decided to close all spaces to the opposition in their stations.³³ However, there was one good practical reason for supporting the official party candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari: in 1989 more than 421 radio concessions expired and their actual holders wanted to renew their concession without major problems (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5
Number of Concessions that Expired in 1989 by State in Mexico

State	Number of Concessions that Expire	State	Number of Concessions that Expire
Aguascalientes	4	Morelos	2
Baja California	23	Nayarit	6
Baja California Sur	2	Nuevo León	20
Campeche	5	Oaxaca	11
Colima	5	Puebla	11
Coahuila	27	Querétaro	3
Chiapas	14	Quintana Roo	1
Chihuahua	27	San Luis Potosí	8
Distrito Federal (Mexico City)	38	Sinaloa	12
Durango	8	Sonora	27
Guanajuato	19	Tabasco	8
Guerrero	10	Tamaulipas	29
Hidalgo	3	Tlaxcala	0
Jalisco	29	Veracruz	33
State of México	5	Yucatán	7
Michoacán	20	Zacatecas	4

Source: Enrique Velasco Ugalde, "Las concesiones que se vencen en 1989", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, n.4, March-April 1989.

³² Gutiérrez Espindola and Pérez Lobato (1989), pgs.152-155.

³³ Jorge Meléndez, "No habrá democracia sin apertura de medios", in the Symposium on *Medios, democracia y fines*, Mexico City, UNAM/Friederich Nauman Stiftung/Notimex, 1989, p.302.

In a country without clear and regular criteria for renewing the concessions,³⁴ since this depended basically on political criteria, most of the concessionaires did not take the risk of having their licenses revoked and openly supported the PRI candidate, especially in such a complex electoral situation as that of 1988. However, in spite of the general support to the PRI, some stations, like Radio Mil, still granted certain spaces for the two most important opposition candidates, Cárdenas and Clouthier, notwithstanding the pressure of the Secretariat of *Gobernación* and the Office of the Presidency.³⁵

It was precisely during the end of the 1980s and the early 1990s when the conditions in which radio was developing experienced a further change and generated incentives for adopting new programming formulae: an important growth in the number of stations not only within a context in which the radio's share of the advertising market has remained stagnant for almost ten years (in 12-13 percent), but in which the general economy has performed quite poorly due to frequent instability and crisis. Such situation affected the radio stations in their programming.

Specifically in the case of the news broadcasts, radio stations facing stronger competition for relatively poorer resources, decided to try more aggressive and open formulae which led them eventually to trespass the limits of tolerance of the regime. What is noticeable is that, though censorship became common during this period, many stations tried—at times erratically and timidly—to sustain their news broadcasts on the air. When the pressure was stronger the common attitude of the stations was to dismiss the newscaster. By 1994 it was already evident that some important stations had consolidated more open and independent spaces on the radio, though this was not still the rule with the news broadcasts, but just the initial step.

As Table 5.6 shows between 1973 and 1981, saw a period of an average economic growth of 6.7% per year³⁶ and, except for 1975-6, of political and economic stability, the annual average share of the radio of the national advertising market was higher than fifteen

³⁴ See Chapter Two for a discussion on the law concerning radio and television.

³⁵ Both candidates were invited for a half-an-hour programme where they could present their points of view, though an explicit warning was made to the Vice-President of the Nucleo Radio Mil, Guillermo Salas, against those invitations by the Director General of Radio and Television of the Secretariat of *Gobernación* and the Office of the Presidency. Interview with Guillermo Salas, August 2000.

³⁶ Taking as a basis 1980 prices.

percent, but with a constantly growing advertising investment. In this situation of growth the number of commercial stations grew from 554 to 800, i.e. a growth of 44.4 percent.

Table 5.6
Advertising Investment on Radio and TV, 1973-1981

Type of Media	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
TV	50%	55%	60%	62%	65%	65%	65%	65%	65%
Radio	20%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Newspapers and Magazines	15%	15%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Cinema	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Others	10%	10%	8%	6%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Total (in Thousands of Pesos)	4,500	5,000	5,500	6,000	7,500	8,000	8,500	9,750	13,500

Source: Asociacion Mexicana de Agencias de Publicidad, AMAP, *Tabala de Datos Historicos, 1973-1985*, AMAP, Mexico City.

Similarly, in the period between 1982-1994 the number of radio stations (and of concessions given to operate such radio stations) grew from 800 to 1,068, i.e. a growth of 33.5 percent. There are two important things to notice here. Firstly, the 1982-1994 growth in the number of stations operating occurred at a time of enormous economic instability and very low economic growth. Though the annual GDP growth average for the period is of 1.58 percent a year, the economy oscillated between -4.2 percent of the GDP in 1983 to 4.4 percent of the GDP in 1990 (see Table 5.7 for the years between 1985 and 1994).

Table 5.7
Nominal and Real GDP Growth Between 1985-1994

	Based on 1993 Prices			Based on 1980 Prices		
		Real			Real	
Year	Nominal Million Pesos Per Year	Million Pesos of 1993	(%) Growth	Nominal Million Pesos Per Year	Million Pesos of 1980	(%) Growth
1985	n.a.	1043818	2.2	47392	4920	2.6
1986	n.a.	1011278	-3.1	79191	4736	-3.8
1987	n.a.	1028846	1.7	193312	4818	1.7
1988	416305	1042066	1.3	390451	4876	1.2
1989	548858	1085815	4.2	507618	5047	3.5
1990	738898	1140848	5.1	686406	5272	4.4
1991	949148	1189017	4.2	865166	5463	3.6
1992	1125334	1232162	3.6	1019156	5620	2.9
1993	1256334	1256196	2.0	1145382	5659	0.7
1994	1420159	1312200	4.5	1272799	5857	3.5

n.a. Non Available

Source: Elaborated with data from INEGI's *Cuentas Nacionales* (various years) by the Social and Economic Studies Division (División de Estudios Económicos y Sociales) of Banamex, *México Social 1996-1998. Estadísticas Seleccionadas*, México, Grupo Financiero Banamex-Accival, Mexico City, 1998, pp.390-391.

Secondly, the growth in the number of stations occurred also at a time when the average share of radio in the advertising market decreased from an average of 15 to 13.3 percent, remaining more or less constant during the whole period 1982-1994 (Tables 5.8a and 5.8b). The difficult situation for the radio (and other media) becomes clear when one notices that the relative lack of growth in the ad-investments on radio also occurred in a time of high annual inflation rates. For instance, between 1985 and 1994, annual average inflation rates were the following: 1985, 56%; 1986, 75%; 1987, 120%; 1988, 150%; 1989, 24%, 1990, 29.9%; 1991, 18.8%; 1992, 11.9%; 1993, 8%; and 1994, 7.1%.

Table 5.8a
Percentage of Advertising on the Media, 1990-1994

Type of Media	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Television	68%	68%	67%	50%	67%	65%	68%	64%
Radio	13%	13%	15.8%	21%	13%	12%	13%	12%
Printed Press and Magazines	10%	10%	9.5%	15%	14%	16%	14%	17%
Others	9%	9%	7.7%	13.3%	6%	8%	5%	7%

Source: Asociacion Mexicana de Agencias de Publicidad, AMAP, *Tabala de Datos Historicos, 1973-1985*, AMAP, Mexico City; Informacion Estadistica de la Publicidad en México, *Inversion Publicitaria de la Iniciativa Privada, 1990-2000*, AMAP, 2001.

Table 5.8b
Percentage of Private Advertising on the Media, 1990-1994

Type of Media	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
Television	64%	64%	62%	66%	65%
Radio	12%	13%	12%	12%	12%
Printed Press	13%	13%	10%	10%	10%
Magazines	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%
Others	4%	3%	10%	5%	7%

Source: Informacion Estadistica de la Publicidad en México, *Inversion Publicitaria de la Iniciativa Privada, 1990-2000*, AMAP, 2001. Table elaborated with selected years.

As a result, a large number of stations and radio groups decided to make certain adjustments in their programming in order to make it more attractive and raise the ratings.³⁷ For instance, many FM stations radically changed the programming in order to raise their rating points. Some stations replaced their transmissions of classic music with the more commercial popular music (for instance, XEOY-FM 89.7) or changed from romantic-instrumental music to rock pop (for instance XHDL 98.5 FM) or from jazz music to popular music (for instance XEDF 104.1 FM). However, the most remarkable change with

³⁷ Another important strategy developed by the radio concessionaires by the early and mid-1990s was to establish strategic alliances among them in order to improve ratings, and offer better options of advertising to their clientele. Though it is at the close of the period under consideration in this chapter that such strategies were developed, a more detailed discussion on them will be given in Chapter Eight.

regard to this study was the consolidation of live news broadcasts on FM, a band that had up until then been dedicated almost exclusively to music broadcastings.

Since the late 1980s some networks that provided for the programming of AM and FM stations decided to introduce to the latter, some of the news broadcasts that had been successfully transmitted on AM. Between 1988 and 1994 FM stations began to transmit longer live news broadcasts, adopting in a way the model inaugurated by *Monitor*. In 1994 there were already twenty five news broadcasts transmitting from Mexico City's FM stations every day (some of them three times a day) and re-transmitted in different states. The normal duration of these programmes was between two and three hours and they counted on two or three daily editions. The most important morning radio news broadcasts in 1994 were *Monitor* (XERED-AM and FM) with 3.2 rating points;³⁸ *Buenos Días* (XEDF-FM 104.1) with 1.05 rating points;³⁹ *Ensalada de Lechuga* (XEDF-FM) with .95 rating points;⁴⁰ *El Mañanero* (XHSH-FM) with .78 rating points;⁴¹ *Informativo Panorama* (XEL-ACIR and XHM-Azul 89-FM) with .75 rating points;⁴² and *Cúpula Empresarial* (XERPM-FM) with .45 rating points.⁴³ Also, in 1993 the first station dedicated exclusively to the transmission of news, XECMQ-AM *Formato 21*, of Grupo Radio Centro, was inaugurated. Many of these news broadcasts were constantly being reformed in their formats, in their names, and in their newscasters.

Competition led to the eventual trespassing of the regime's "limits of tolerance". And whenever this happened, censorship raised its head. The normal warning for stations comprised of phone calls from different governmental offices in protest against certain comments or opinions expressed on the air by newscasters, journalists or their guests. Of course every call implied a threat that might even go as far as to cancel the concession. The Director of Radio, Television and Cinematography of the Secretariat of *Gobernación* during most of the Salinas' administration, Manuel Villa Aguilera, was very well known for his short-sighted intolerance to any criticism against the government and for being a hard-liner in respect to the defence of the regime's image. Evidently, every space that the

³⁸ Presented by José Gutiérrez Vivó.

³⁹ Presented initially by Guillermo Ochoa and then replaced by Eduardo Ruiz Healy.

⁴⁰ Presented by Héctor Lechuga and Mauricio Hernández.

⁴¹ Presented by Víctor Trujillo.

⁴² Presented by José Cárdenas, who substituted Guillermo Ochoa.

⁴³ Presented by Oscar Mario Beteta

news programmes gave to opposition groups was immediately registered and used against the station as a means of applying pressure.

The reaction of the radio concessionaires to those threats was usually the removal of the newscasters. Journalists like José Cárdenas were censored and had to leave the news programme *Enfoque* in Stereo Cien in 1993; René Delgado and Miguel Basañez left the news broadcast *Para Empezar* of MVS Radio; Catalina Noriega was replaced on *Radio Fórmula* by Carlos Ramos Padilla; and the very prestigious journalist Miguel Ángel Granados Chapa was removed from NRM because, among other things, he decided to interview Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in September 1993. But this created a certain dynamic horizontal labour market for journalists on the radio, since many of them moved frequently from one station to another, also because many concessionaires were conscious that having a critical and independent journalist was important for the credibility of their news broadcasts and their ratings.

There were many other cases of censorship. For instance, Manuel Villa explicitly prohibited the concessionaires from inviting certain *personae non gratae* to the news broadcasts in their stations. In this "Black List" there were included the names of Adolfo Aguilar Zinser (removed from *Cúpula Empresarial* and replaced by Oscar Mario Beteta), Lorenzo Meyer, Jorge Castañeda, and Demetrio Sodi to name just a few. In October 1993 the government announced that Villa was going to be replaced by Jorge Montaña, who was until that moment, the Director General of the IMER. Nevertheless, this change did not alter the previous censorship trend and in 1994 there were more cases of journalists censored on the radio. For example, Enrique Quintana of *Enfoque* was fired in 22 August for interviewing a former collaborator of the Federal Prosecutor Office, Eduardo Valle, who gave information about the links between top government officials and drug cartel bosses.

Censorship was strengthened in the difficult year of 1994 not only because of the general elections that were to take place in August, but also because of the *Zapatista* uprising on January 1st and because of a series of political upheavals and general instability that included the murder of the PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio in March. Further problems were caused by the sudden resignation of the Secretary of *Gobernación*,

Jorge Carpizo, the assassination of the Secretary General of the PRI, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, and the economic collapse of December. The government wanted to have absolute control over the information that appeared on the news and therefore the surveillance over news broadcasts was careful. For instance, in the case of the *Zapatistas*, the government prohibited the news broadcasts from referring to them by their actual name —*Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* or *EZLN*—or from using the words “insurgents”, “guerrilla”, or any other vindicating name. More acceptable were the words “armed group”, “law transgressors”, or “delinquents”.⁴⁴

Of course, during the electoral campaign government pressure became stronger, though one should also note that the pressures on the concessionaires did not come only from the government. The attitude of the CIRT made clear its support for the PRI candidates. The CIRT negotiated with the Secretariat of *Gobernación* for certain agreements through which the media were not authorised to suspend their normal transmissions during the election day on August 21st 1994, for informing on the developments of the process. The only way to present any information on the election day before the closing of the ballots was through brief and general “information flashes”.⁴⁵ This measure was unwillingly accepted by certain radio stations, like XERED and XHRED-FM who were already prepared to transmit an all-day live coverage of the electoral process.

Also, the CIRT hired the services of Mitofsky-Harris-Bimsa, a famous pollster firm, in order to carry out an exit poll whose outcome was to be transmitted exclusively on the radio and television channels without the possibility for the stations to hire any other polling services or present results of their own. Finally, on 21st August 1994, the Chamber distributed a circular letter among its members in which it clearly recommended that they should not transmit any news on which the general outcome of the election was put into question by opposition parties or in which there was any mention of the possibility of fraud.⁴⁶ In brief, the microphones were to be closed to opposition parties. Consequently, the meeting of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in Mexico City central square on 22 August was not covered by any radio station or TV channel.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ *El Financiero*, January 12th 1994.

⁴⁵ *La Jornada*, August 19th 1994.

⁴⁶ Sosa Plata and Esquivel (1996), p.270.

⁴⁷ *La Jornada*, August 23rd 1994.

In spite of that, there were some stations that tried to keep some spaces open for alternative political opinions, and such an attitude found support on a document published in February 28th by the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) on the criteria that were expected to guide the presentation of information related to the political campaigns on radio and television: objectivity, uniform quality in news management, possibility of replication, respect to the candidates' private life, specification of all paid-up information, and insertion of a specific section in the news broadcasts to inform on the developments of the campaigns.⁴⁸ These criteria were "moral suggestions" and lacked legal obligation.

However, in June 1994 the IFE decided to carry out a careful monitoring of the ways in which the information on the campaigns and the candidates was being presented by the main radio and television stations (Figure 5.C).⁴⁹ Table 5.9 shows the total time and average time dedicated to each party on radio news broadcasts.

Table 5.9
Coverage Time of the Parties' Campaigns on Radio News Broadcasts, June 22nd-
August 16th 1994

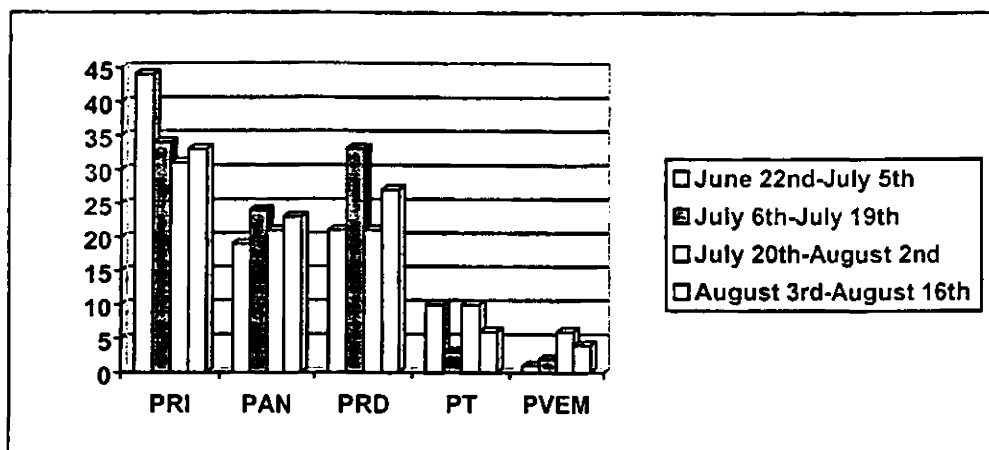
	PRI	PRD	PAN	PT	PVEM	PDM	PFCRN	PPS	PARM
Time	21h41'	16h19'	13h34'	4h18'	2h8'	1h59'	1h15'	45'	42'
	33"	3"	4"	47"	13"	8"	19"	56"	11"
Average	35%	26.1%	21.7%	6.9%	3.4%	2.4%	2%	1.2%	1.1%

Source: Elaborated with data from Instituto Federal Electoral, *Informe global sobre el monitoreo de noticiarios de radio y televisión de los lineamientos sugeridos por la comisión de radiodifusión a la Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Radio y Televisión. Miércoles 22 de junio al martes 16 de agosto de 1994*, Mexico City, IFE, Comisión de Radiodifusión, 1994.

⁴⁸ For a detailed account on the content of the document published by the IFE "Lineamientos generales aplicables en los noticiarios de radio y televisión respecto de la información y difusión e actividades de campaña de los partidos políticos", see Chapter Four.

⁴⁹ Instituto Federal Electoral, *Informe global sobre el monitoreo de noticiarios de radio y televisión de los lineamientos sugeridos por la comisión de radiodifusión a la Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Radio y*

Figure 5.C
Average Time for the Five Largest Parties on Radio News Broadcasts on a 15 Days
Study Basis, June 22nd –August 16th 1994

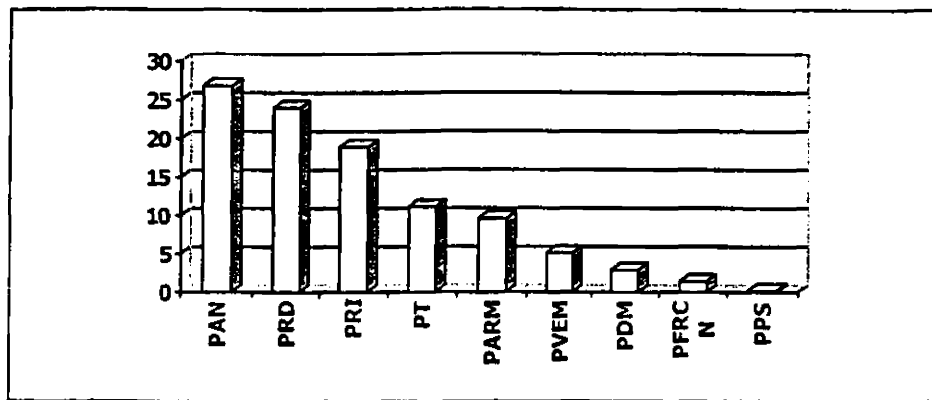


Source: Elaborated with data from Instituto Federal Electoral, *Informe global sobre el monitoreo de noticiarios de radio y televisión de los lineamientos sugeridos por la comisión de radiodifusión a la Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Radio y Televisión. Miércoles 22 de junio al martes 16 de agosto de 1994*, Mexico City, IFE, Comisión de Radiodifusión, 1994.

As one can see, during the first fifteen days of the monitoring there was a strong bias in favour of the PRI in the percentage of time devoted to information on its campaign. This outcome, however, became more balanced amongst the three largest parties in the following six weeks, even favouring the PAN and PRD during a second monitoring carried out between the 17th and the 19th of August 1994 (Figure 5.D).

Televisión. Miércoles 22 de junio al martes 16 de agosto de 1994, Mexico City, IFE, Comisión de Radiodifusión, 1994.

Figure 5.D
Average Time for the Parties on all Radio News Broadcasts, August 17th-19th 1994

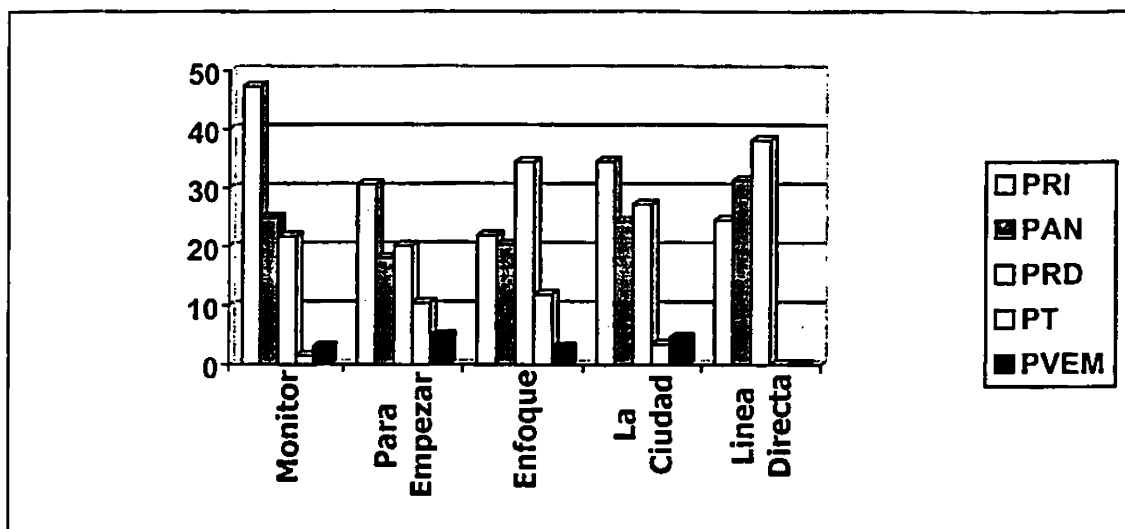


Source: IFE, Comisión de Radiodifusión, *Addenda del informe global del monitoreo en noticiarios de radio y televisión de los lineamientos sugeridos por la comisión de radiodifusión a la Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Radio y Televisión. Miércoles 17 al viernes 19 de agosto de 1994*, Mexico City, IFE, Comisión de Radiodifusión, 1994.

Though the total average of time devoted by the radio news broadcasts to information on the campaigns favoured the PRI, it is interesting to note that not all the stations behaved in the same way all the time (Figure 5.E) and, when observed individually, some news broadcasts even presented more information on the opposition candidates than on the official PRI candidate. A case in point was the news broadcast *Enfoque*, whose newscaster, Enrique Quintana, was fired one day after the elections.

The data on Figure 5.E shows that, though in general, the radio was still aligned with the regime's positions, not all the stations behaved in the same way, and some even decided to apply their own independent journalistic criteria, which at times coincided with the IFE requirements. It is true that, not all the radio stations were open before that time, but there was an increasing movement, led by some important stations, towards generating more spaces in which other voices could be heard.

Figure 5.E
Average Time for the Parties on Different Radio News Broadcasts, June 22nd –August 16th 1994



Source: Elaborated with data from Instituto Federal Electoral, *Informe global sobre el monitoreo de noticiarios de radio y televisión de los lineamientos sugeridos por la comisión de radiodifusión a la Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Radio y Televisión. Miércoles 22 de junio al martes 16 de agosto de 1994*, Mexico City, IFE, Comisión de Radiodifusión, 1994.

The competition for resources, clientele and publicity induced some radio concessionaires to test more interesting programming formats and ways of presenting information in an attempt to raise the ratings. In other words, economic competition created the incentives for some stations to explore the new terrain opened to them by the growing political plurality, and the need of the people to receive more reliable information. A survey carried out by Enrique Leon Martinez shows precisely that the level of credibility of the radio news broadcasts is higher in relation to that of TV broadcasts.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, this does not mean that by the end of the period studied in this chapter audiences were completely confident of what was presented on the radio. In November 1993 a survey conducted by the Opinion Study Cabinet (Gabinete de Estudios de Opinion, S.C.) and published on the weekly *Étcetera* shows that 28 percent of the individuals interviewed believed that the information presented on the radio was “highly censored”, 39 percent believed that such information

⁵⁰ Enrique Leon Martínez, *Los medios de comunicación en el proceso político de México*, Mexico City, IPN, 1998, pgs.49-52 and 134-137.

was "more or less" censored, 20 percent that it was "not very" censored, and only 4 percent believed that it was "not censored at all".⁵¹

This outcome is relatively coincident with the uneven ways in which political information was transmitted during the 1994 electoral campaign on radio, when some stations did present the information more independently while the majority decided to conform to the established dispositions. However, the first steps towards more independent radio were made during this period as an unintended consequence of the need for survival of radio stations, a stronger competition for resources, and the profitable uses that the concessionaires found for to the need of the people to find spaces within the media in which they could participate and voice their opinions.

⁵¹ *Excétera*, November 18th 1993.

Part III

The Electoral Reform of 1996 and the Openness on the Broadcast Media

Chapter Six

The Political Context II, 1994-2000

Between 1995 and 2000 a transition occurred in Mexico which can be described as the accelerated “de-consolidation” process of the post-revolutionary regime, since many of the rules that sustained it ceased to be valid, but without new ones to legitimately replace them. Corporatism and the PRI monopoly of power were in a irreversible process of erosion. Unending discussions took place upon new rules and a substantial agreement was reached on one crucial point: the widening of the electoral arena as the space where political conflicts should be channelled and its definitive openness as the space in which different political forces could legitimately and truly compete for power.

This favoured the emergence of a truly autonomous, fair and competitive electoral arena. Thus, during this period when the long political liberalisation process –which granted the regime the ultimate control over politics and characterised the Mexican protracted transition—finally reached its end by completely opening the electoral arena to true competition among the parties in which the outcomes were not determined from the outset. This was the end of the party system that had been consolidating in Mexico since the 1988 electoral process dominated by three main political organisations, the PRI, the PAN and the PRD.

This period was marked by the approval of a new electoral reform in 1996, which granted the independence of the electoral institute in charge of organising the process –the *Instituto Federal Electoral*, IFE—and established clearer conditions for party competition. All this seen in a wider context could very well be viewed as the highly successful outcome of a protracted transition whose major advances had always been concentrated at the electoral level and of the party system since the Reform of 1977. The present chapter is divided into three parts. The first one refers to the political instability and the economic collapse that followed in 1994-95 and that in many ways created the conditions for an accelerated passage from a situation of political liberalisation to another in which the regime lost its main control over the access to political power. The second discusses the Political Reform of 1996 that granted the final openness of the electoral

arena and strengthened the party system. The last one briefly comments on the elections of 1997 and 2000.

Political and Economic Instability, 1994-95

Still during his last year in office, and despite all the apparent success of the economic strategies of President Salinas, economic growth was not evenly reflected either in the regions or in the various social sectors. As one author states,

The positive results of these reforms raised the expectations amongst Mexicans that the country was on the brink of becoming an advanced industrialized nation –an expectation that proved short-lived. Even with the evident improvement, economic growth was insufficient to generate much needed employment of about 1.2 million jobs a year or make a dent in widespread underemployment [...] which in 1994 represented 17 percent of the labour force. Insufficient growth made it impossible to improve income distribution and began to raise doubts about the viability of exclusive reliance upon free markets and private ownership as a long-term economic development strategy.¹

The continuity of the fiction of buoyancy created by the regime between 1990 and 1993 greatly depended on the confidence of the investors –especially the foreign ones—and on the maintenance of the internal political stability –something the PRI had been doing for a long time. Any difficulty in those areas would endanger the basis of the economic model, and the modernisation project of Salinas. The first signs of decay in the economy appeared in 1993, a year in which the government had to use public expenditure to raise the Aggregate Demand. At first, this was thought to be only a temporary measure. However, public life was abruptly shaken, paradoxically the day when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) came into force, i.e. January 1st 1994.

On New Year's eve a small but relatively well organised military group took control of some municipalities and towns in the southern state of Chiapas. The *Zapatista* guerrilla uprising was manned by Indians from different villages in the mountains of that state, who soon gained the sympathy –and support—of a large number of NGOs and other groups of civil society, both domestic and foreign, which traditionally had traditionally fought for human and minority rights. The revolt of these poor Indian peasantry created a

¹ González Gómez, (1988), p.42.

“shock of consciousness” in urban Mexico, which had been fantasising, due to the widespread publicity of the so-called immediate benefits that the NAFTA would bring to the country, and an accelerated insertion into a level of development that could finally assure a sustained improvement in living standards. Instead, January 1994 was the start of a dramatic year that not only made evident the social costs of the neo-liberal policies and the absolute decrease in social expenditures, but also the degree of decay of the Mexican ruling elite and the strong conflicts within it.

In a conference held at El Colegio de Mexico at the end of 1993, the Secretary of Commerce, Jaime Serra, proudly declared that the country had accumulated foreign currency reserves above USD \$ 30 billion. Even after the *Zapatista* uprising, in February 1994, the foreign reserves were still around USD \$ 29 billion, however the continuous political instability along with continuous political scandals within the PRI elite generated a volatile economic atmosphere with huge capital outflows that weighted heavily on the exchange rate. In March, the official party's candidate, Luis D. Colosio, was murdered during his campaign whilst visiting Tijuana, city bordering the U.S., creating turmoil among the PRI groups. Between May and July there remained still around USD\$ 17 billion in foreign reserves, but the unexpected resignation of the Secretary of *Gobernación* caused a further capital loss of USD\$ 3 billion. In September the General Secretary of the PRI was assassinated and few weeks afterwards the Special Commissioner for investigating the case (who was the brother of the murdered politician)² decided to quit his charge. The overall result was a deep political uncertainty combined with heavy pressure over economic stability and financial confidence, which stopped foreign capital inflows, depleted foreign exchange reserves, and led finally to a strong devaluation of the currency which started the infamous “Tequila effect” in the international financial markets.³

² One year afterwards he was arrested in the U.S. while he was trying to enter that country with U.S.\$ 10 million undeclared. In 1997 he committed suicide in a prison in the state of New Jersey.

³ For M.A. González, even before the political turmoil of 1994 there were strong signs that may have forecast the economic crisis of 1994. There were essentially three factors that brought about the crisis: the way monetary policy was implemented (liquidity, interest rate and exchange rate policy); the size of the current account deficit (which was reflecting a huge gap between imports and exports before 1994); and the way in which trade liberalisation took place in the early 1990s. The current account deficit was financed through external credit and foreign investment, but after the events of 1994 foreign capital inflows ceased to enter the country and the foreign currency reserves started to diminish because of pressure on the peso and the ways in which monetary policy was handed (which increased credit from the central bank to the

In the midst of this scenario, the general elections of August 21st 1994 became a matter of serious preoccupation for the government. In 1993, during the height of the Salinas' administration, a new electoral reform was passed by the PRI alone, counting on the fact that the outcomes of the 1991 elections gave that party 320 deputies, only ten deputies less than the 2/3 required for making constitutional reforms. These ten missing deputies were easily found, since the pseudo-opposition parties PPS, PARM and PFCRN had 12, 15 and 23 deputies respectively. The most important modification introduced by the Reform of 1993 was to establish a maximum of 300 deputies for any majority party obtaining between 50 percent plus one and 60 percent of the national voting. However, in the event that that party obtained more than 60 percent of the voting, it was to receive a number of deputies from its PR list up to 315. This was seen as a "generous" concession from an apparently all-powerful regime to the opposition parties. However, in the middle of 1994, the opposition parties' pressure made the government's party approve important modifications to the electoral system. Though the political instability forced the government and the PRI to negotiate a reform, the PRD left the negotiating talks since the regime were still unwilling to cede its ultimate control over the electoral authority. The PRI and the PAN continued the talks and the latter gave its support to the reforms as long as three conditions were granted.

Firstly, though the government maintained control over the organisation and the electoral process (the Secretary of *Gobernación* was still the President of the Federal Electoral Commission, now renamed Federal Electoral Institute), all the parties were to be more equitably represented on the electoral boards. Secondly, a Federal Electoral Tribunal was created, which depended on the Judicial Power (which though controlled by the president, it implied the possibility of a further relative independence), whose function was to decide on all electoral disputes. Thirdly, a Citizen Electoral Board was created composed of independent well-known citizens accepted by all parties, with moral the power to oversee the electoral process and with a voice, though no vote, within the IFE.

rest of the economy at a rate higher than that consistent with economic stabilisation and which was intended to avert a liquidity crisis). These short term measures did control the interest rates for a while but after the murder of the Secretary General of the PRI in September even more foreign capital inflows decreased, it was not possible to maintain the same strategy. A devaluation was necessary, but the conditions of credibility in the economy were lost by the end of the year. Abruptly the value of the peso moved from 3.75 to the US dollar to more than 5.00 pesos to the dollar in December. See *Ibid.*, pgs.45-54.

In spite of these improvements, the government started a strong campaign for placing its candidate as the best choice in times of uncertainty. The *Zapatista* uprising and the murder of the PRI presidential candidate were used by the regime to manipulate the electoral advertising. The government's electoral ads emphasised the need to vote for stability and peace, which ironically meant to vote for the PRI candidates.⁴ With a decisive electoral marketing campaign and the support of television,⁵ the government was able to polarise the electoral options within an already exhausted society between a vote for stability, i.e. the PRI, and a vote for inexperience and chaos, especially the PRD. Confronted with such a dramatic year, people awaited the call to the polls—showing a preference for institutional solutions for political problems—and the vote turn-out on the day reached around 77 percent.

The victory went to the PRI presidential candidate, Ernesto Zedillo (who replaced Colosio after his assassination), with 17 million 181 651 votes that represented 50.1 percent of the total votes. An explanation of the high participation rate in the electoral process and of the victory of the PRI lies in what has been called "the vote of fear"; fear of increasing political and social instability, and, of course, fear of further violence and disorder.⁶

The PRI obtained the majority of the seats in Congress (Table 6.1) and the most important victories in local governments.⁷ Once again the regime's apparatus—and private television, as will be seen in the following chapter—supported the official candidate, Ernesto Zedillo, making the electoral process a highly unequal and unfair one, as recognised by the new president himself.⁸ The victory of Zedillo was to be the last

⁴ Actually the two most important messages that the PRI used for its electoral publicity were "I vote for peace" (Yo voto por la paz) and "For the well being of the family" (Bienestar para la familia). The first one referred to the possible political instability that a defeat of the PRI may bring to the country. The second one referred to the stability required for economic growth. These ads were accepted by various important groups, like the Mexican Banking Association, whose leader, Roberto Hernández, declared one week before the elections that "any electoral outcome negative to the PRI may bring financial instability".

⁵ See Chapter Four.

⁶ See the interview of Juan Villoro in *La Jornada* on August 21st 1994 and the article of Héctor Aguilar Camín, "Compuerta", in *Nexos*, no.201, September, Mexico City 1994.

⁷ The only relevant victory for opposition was in the race for the government of Guanajuato, where the PAN's candidate Vicente Fox easily defeated the PRI and the PRD.

⁸ In 1995, Zedillo declared that though his election has been legal according to the rules of the time, it has been unequal in the conditions of competition among the parties, and there was therefore the need to negotiate a new electoral reform.

uninterrupted victory of an "official PRI candidate" in gaining the presidential seat since 1929.

Table 6.1
Composition of the Chamber of Deputies during the LVI Legislative Period (1994-1997)

Party	Number of Deputies	Majority Deputies	Percentage	PR Deputies	Percentage
PRI	302	273	91	29	9
PAN	118	20	16.9	98	83.1
PRD	70	7	10	63	90
PT	10	0	0	10	100

Source: *Directorio de la LVI Legislatura de la Cámara de Diputados*.

The fragile victory of the PRI—inspired more by fear than conviction—was immediately shaken in September when the Secretary General of the PRI, Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu, was brutally assassinated on the street making of the brother of the still President Salinas one of the principal suspects of this atrocity. This new political scandal among the *Priista* groups was swiftly followed by further tension and disagreements between the government and the *Zapatistas* that led this group to break the military truce in December. All this pressure contributed to the economic collapse that followed the announcement of a devaluation of the Peso in December 19th 1994. The impact of the economic breakdown on the GNP can be seen in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2
GNP in Mexico, 1994-1997
Annual Variation Average for Three Months-Periods

	1994	1995	1996	1997
Jan-Mar	2.3	-.4	.1	4.6
Apr-Jun	4.0	-4.9	3.2	6.5
Jul-Sept	4.2	-5.9	4.4	6.8
Oct-Dec	4.5	-6.2	5.1	6.8

Source: *Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI)*, Sistema de cuentas nacionales de México. Web site address: www.inegi.gob.mx

The international financial aid promised by the U.S. government and the IMF (USDS 50 billion from which USDS 26,253 billions were used during 1995) were delayed, and by February 1995 the peso was still devaluating until it reached an exchange rate of 6.20 to the US Dollar, almost double what it had been in December 1994. The social consequences of the crisis were devastating. According to a study carried out by the specialist Julio Boltvinik, based on data from the National Urban Employment Survey (ENEU), between 1994 and 1999 the number of poor and extremely poor people dramatically rose from 11.04 to 13.26 millions and from 8.26 to 16.68 million respectively.⁹ According to the Annual Economic Report of the Bank of Mexico industrial production decreased in real terms by 29.1 percent only in 1995.¹⁰ The effect of the crisis on the GDP caused an overall decrease of -5.3 percent that was larger than the previous dramatic decrease after the 1982 crisis, which was a decrease of -4.5 percent of the GDP in 1983.¹¹

This situation put a lot of pressure on the political group that entered office with President Zedillo in December 1994. Since the economic solutions to the crisis implied further doses of restrictive economic policies, tight control over public finances and a strategy centred around the control of inflation and a strict monetary policy, President Zedillo seemed to understand that after more than fifteen years of administering the same economic "receipts", a good way to channel social and political pressure was through the further openness of the political arena, i.e. to generate more favourable conditions for party competition. This solution has been used by the regime since the Reform of 1977. However, the magnitude of this new crisis in a situation dominated by recession and low growth rates for more than fifteen years made it very difficult to maintain the ultimate control over a political liberalisation process. Under such conditions a further openness of the electoral arena could very well mean the loss of its historical capacity to monopolise the upper echelons of the political power pyramid.

⁹ See Julio Boltvinik, "Economía Moral. Fábrica de pobres", in *La Jornada*, July 14th 2000.

¹⁰ *Informe Anual del Banco de México*, B.de M., Mexico City, 1996, p.89.

¹¹ Arturo Huerta G., *Carteras vencidas. Inestabilidad financiera*, Mexico City, Diana, 1997, p.19.

The 1996 Reform and the End of Political Liberalisation

The 1994-95 economic crisis proved to be catastrophic for the Mexican post-revolutionary regime. The promise of a sustained economic improvement that the Salinas administration had created, suddenly evaporated, leaving the regime's structure even weaker than in 1982 because the old corporatist networks and the social penetration of the official party had been slowly eroding for almost fifteen years. The revolutionary origins of the regime, the inclusive official party, the mixed economy, and the old developmental formula that combined growth with stability, which were all the pillars of both corporatism and the social acceptance of the PRI, were definitively in decline. The basic unit of the traditional post-revolutionary regime, corporatism, was very quickly ceding its place to more individual forms of representation that were increasingly strengthening other forms of political participation. In brief, though the PRI had won the elections of 1994 in the following years, the regime was in a deep and irreversible crisis since the 1995 economic collapse destroyed the confidence and the support that the regime had certainly regained during the Salinas administration, therefore impeding the possibility for the regime to maintain a claim on its legitimacy, based on a relatively efficient economic and administrative performance, (as had been the case during some parts of the 1988-1994 period).

The dramatic combination of political shocks combined with those new economic failures and financial difficulties created a very volatile atmosphere in which unrest and dissatisfaction were dominant. The new president, Ernesto Zedillo, seemed to realise this and instead of pulling the strings and resorting to the re-creation of the deteriorated image of the presidency (still the most important institution in the Mexican political system) through the use of a wide variety of meta-constitutional powers and faculties, he decided to implement further political reform –again at the electoral level—to cope with the by-then-unavoidable political pluralism, to improve the administrative functioning of the Judicial Power and to amend the relationship between the presidency and the official party by what he termed a “healthy distance”.

The alternative that Zedillo seemed to have found at the beginning of his term in the context of crisis was *either* to use the political power of the presidency to rebuild the

political networks and to revive the (remnants of the) corporatist structures, therefore using the PRI as the privileged arena for negotiation and exchange. But all this was to come at the cost of reducing the pace and the rhythm of the economic liberalisation measures, or concentrating on the economic and financial policies even at the cost of seriously damaging the party's popularity.

Ernesto Zedillo was part of the financial technocratic sector of the public administration, where he made his career. With no previous links to the PRI—as was the case of many of the closest collaborators of the Salinas administration—the majority of his cabinet members shared a similar profile. All of them were convinced of the need to continue with the economic liberalisation policies, and to use the party in Congress to approve the required economic reforms and measures no matter how costly they could result for the PRI's popularity.¹²

Moreover, as early as September 1994 he announced that his policy towards the official party was going to be characterised by what he called “a healthy distance”. Though no further explanation was officially given on the way in which that statement was to be interpreted, the dominant opinion was that for the first time the president was not assuming the leadership within the official party and that increasing independence was to be expected within the party internal structures (at least as long as such “independence” of the party would not endanger the President's economic strategy). The Party was basically used as an instrument for passing the economic reforms by a political group that had no real links with it.

In light of this situation, some voices started to rise within the party claiming for a return of the PRI to its popular and nationalist principles and policies, and criticising the “technocratic way of rule” that the party had experienced for the last decade, which alienated it from its “true” principles and compromises with the popular sectors. Many old top ranks of the party that had been excluded by the technocracy that had taken over the party during the De la Madrid administration, were eager to return to the forefront of

¹² In this sense, one of the most remarkable laws that were passed in Congress which happened to be extremely unpopular and politically costly to the PRI was the reform on taxation policy that increased the VAT from 10 to 15 percent in 1996. Paradoxically, the PAN also supported the passing of this reform (since it basically shared the economic project of the Zedillo administration), but the cost seemed to remain mostly on the side of the official party, as the electoral outcome of the 1997 elections showed.

the politics of the party and replace the technocrats. Moreover, during the XVIII National Assembly of the PRI, celebrated in 1996, its National Executive Committee added to the party's basic principles that all future *Priista* presidential candidates must possess the following requirements: the candidate must have a proven party membership of at least 10 years; he/she must have previously occupied an elected office; and, he/she must have held an official post within the party.

These requirements automatically eliminated a large number of would-be candidates from the President's cabinet, and this tied the President's hands—or better, they tried to cut “the finger” (*el dedo*) of the President—to select and decide who his successor must be, a privilege the presidents have enjoyed almost from the start. At that point it became evident that the independence of the PRI was going further than the President wanted, and such attitudes were finally disapproved by President Zedillo since they also hid the seeds of a possible setback in his economic measures and projects. The president decided to re-gain control over the party. A new party chairman and a new party secretary general were immediately appointed showing the true limits of “the healthy distance” between the PRI and the President. Discipline returned to a party that had no experience of autonomous behaviour, and the party congressmen finally passed the economic reforms proposed by the President.

But if the reform inside the PRI was finally stagnant, President Zedillo at the beginning of his term decided to launch what he called a National Political Agreement on Electoral Reform, which was signed with the leaders of the Parliamentary party fractions in January 17th 1995.¹³ President Zedillo's intention was to create a “definitive electoral law” that could consolidate the electoral and party systems in Mexico, and thus “contribute to the perfection of the existent democracy”. Inside the PRI, some critics emerged, since it was considered that there was no need to “give more concessions to the opposition”, especially at a time when not only the PRI had the majority in Congress but the President himself had been elected by a true majority of votes, giving him democratic

¹³ At that moment there were eight national parties represented in the Federal Congress, the PRI, the PAN, the PRD, the Labour Party (*Partido del Trabajo*, PT) the Green Party (*Partido Verde Ecologista de México*, PVEM), the *Partido del Frente Cardenista de Reconstrucción Nacional* (PFCRN), the Popular Socialist Party (PPS), and the Democratic Mexican Party (*Partido Demócrata Mexicano*, PDM).

legitimacy, (the highest of all PRI presidents ever).¹⁴ For many PRI members there was no need to negotiate with the opposition for further reforms.

It is only when one takes into account the situation of economic crisis and the government decision to carry on with a Neo-liberal economic programme that the decision of President Zedillo to implement another electoral reform makes sense. Under such circumstances, it was considered by the promoters of the electoral reform that a viable way to avoid the further emergence of anti-institutional protests (of the kind of the *Zapatistas* and other groups), was to finally grant the autonomy of the electoral arena, especially after six years of confrontations between the regime and the centre-leftist PRD. To maintain the restrictions to open, free and fair participation and competition, and to keep the PRD at the margins, (as had been the strategy of Salinas), was considered to be explosive under the conditions of economic crisis, especially if stricter economic reforms were to be applied, as the President wanted. The further opening of the electoral arena would result in the virtual end of the long process of political liberalisation put into practice by the regime since the political reform of 1977, a process in which all "concessions" to opposition had been made without endangering the regime's ultimate control over political life. However, a new reform could end such control and pave the way for truly fair and competitive electoral processes.

The Electoral Reform of 1996 was, in general terms, the outcome of the compromise between all the political parties and the Executive Power for establishing acceptable and equitable conditions for electoral competition. In July 1996, after almost eighteen months of negotiations, the Reform was approved by the consensus of all the parties in the Chamber of Deputies. Paradoxically, at the end, only the PRI deputies approved of the law (along with few scattered votes from opposition), since a great disagreement followed when the issue related to party financing was discussed, in which opposition party members considered that the amounts of money granted for their finance were extremely high. Though it was agreed by all parties that the bulk of party financing would come from public sources (limiting the size of individual contributions to 0.5 percent of public financing), the PRI wanted to set public financing at an unprecedented level of

¹⁴ Though no open criticism was made against the President's initiative, the press registers a series of comments given by notable PRI members in which they are not convinced of the need to further reform the electoral law.

USDS 278 million for all parties, with 30 percent being allocated equally among all parties and 70 percent according to their share of the vote in the previous election.

In spite of the disagreement with the parties, the majority of PRI congressmen approved the law. However, these resources would prove crucial for providing the parties with more equitable and fair conditions within the electoral processes as far as electoral advertising in the mass media was concerned—especially radio but, most of all, on television.¹⁵ As for the Electoral Reform of 1996, its most important innovations were the following:

- It reduced to 300 the total number of deputies that any single political party could get either by majority vote or PR formulae. This established a maximum limit of 60 percent of the total number of deputies to be assigned to any majority party in the Chamber of Deputies.
- It added 32 Senate seats to be distributed according to PR rule. Though this reform opened the Senate House to more party representation, it definitively altered the original representational character of the Upper Chamber, i.e. territorial representation. Before 1996, only 96 Senators were elected, three from each state of the Federation. Two of them were elected through simple majority rule, and the third was adjudicated to the party that obtained the second largest voting in each state. Therefore, the territorial representation principle was maintained until the 1996 Reform, since a fourth senator is chosen from PR lists.
- It made more flexible the criteria for parties to register. In the 1996 Law the number of national affiliates required to obtain the register was reduced from 65 thousand to 30 thousand, which can be presented in two modalities. Either, each party must prove to have 3 thousand affiliates in at least 10 of the 32 Federal States, or it must prove to have 300 affiliates in at least 100 of the 300 Electoral Districts of the country.
- It raised the minimum percentage of national voting required for parties to keep their national register from 1.5 to 2 percent of voting turn-out. This 2 percent serves also as a minimum basis with which the parties are able to obtain PR deputies from their lists.

¹⁵ See Chapters Seven and Eight.

- It recognised the possibility of organising and register National Political Associations (NPA) as different from political parties. NPA must prove to have 7 thousand affiliates in the country and national delegations in at least 10 Federal States.
- At electoral times, parties must have more access to the broadcasting media. During general elections national parties are entitled to obtain up to 250 hours on radio and 200 hours on television. These figures are reduced by 50 percent during mid-term elections. At the same time, the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) is given the faculty of monitoring the mass media transmissions of information on politics (news broadcasts and programmes on political debates) during campaigns, in order to control that such information respects the time assigned to each party and is not intentionally biased.¹⁶ The law also prohibits any group or organisation that is not a party from acquiring TV or radio adverts to promote or attack a candidate or a party. Only the parties can buy spaces in the media for their advertising. At the same time, the 1996 Law grants the right of candidates and parties to rectify any inaccurate information presented on them by the media.
- Total independence was granted to the Federal Electoral Institute from the Executive Power, i.e. the President. Before this reform, the President of the General Board of the IFE was the Secretary of *Gobernación*. This post was replaced by a Presidential Advisor (*Consejero Presidente*) chosen by the consensus of all parties and approved by a two-thirds majority within the Chamber of Deputies. Also proposed by the parties were another eight Electoral Advisors (*Consejeros Electorales*), who along with the Presidential Advisor make up the Federal Electoral Board (*Consejo Electoral Federal*). All of them are selected from amongst electoral specialists and academics, (party members and politicians are disqualified), to serve for six-year terms with the opportunity of being re-elected once. These Board members are the only ones with a voice and vote in electoral matters, since the party and congress representatives that assist to the Board meetings can only have voice without vote. The internal organisation of the IFE was divided into specialised commissions in charge of administrative, organisational, electoral, fiscal and media-surveillance tasks. The IFE

¹⁶ A more detailed discussion on this point is found in Chapters 7 and 8.

became therefore in a highly professional and independent institution, which came to be key for the organisation of the 1997 and 2000 elections.

- At a constitutional level the prevalence of the public funding was established over all sorts of private financing for the parties. Public funding is assigned in the following way: 30 percent is divided equally amongst the parties and the other 70 percent is assigned according to the voting percentage each party obtained in the previous elections. New parties do not receive funding until after their first electoral competition. Private funding cannot be greater than ten percent of the public funding destined to any party.
- Another important change that the 1996 Reform introduced was the establishment of the Supreme Court as the final arbiter of the electoral results. The Federal Electoral Tribunal was made part of the Supreme Court and its staff is now composed by judges appointed by the chief justice with the approval of two-thirds of the Chamber of Senators (previously they were appointed by two-thirds of the Chamber of Deputies at the President's suggestion).
- The Federal Electoral Tribunal was given the faculty to qualify the elections and have the last word on the results.
- Finally, the parties were given the faculty of promoting, whenever they considered fit, a case of unconstitutionality before the Supreme Court of Justice to revise the legality of the acts and resolutions of the electoral legislation, both local and federal.

The Reform of 1996 altered the nature in which transition had been developing in Mexico. Since the Reform of 1977 the transition took the shape of a process of political liberalisation in which the regime decided the rhythms and the topics that could be negotiated. As discussed in Chapter Three, liberalisation is a process that makes effective certain rights that protect both individuals and groups from power arbitrariness.¹⁷ However, the process was initiated "from above", from the regime itself, in the belief that by opening up certain spaces for individual and group action, the regime "can relieve various pressures and obtain necessary information and support *without* altering the structure of authority, that is, without becoming accountable to the citizens for their

¹⁷ O'Donnell and Schmitter, (1986), p.7.

actions or subjecting their claim to rule fair and competitive elections;... in our discussion, we refer to such cases as 'liberalized authoritarianism' (known also by their Spanish name of *dictablandas*)".¹⁸

In Mexico, the economic growth of the 1940s-1970s generated little pressure for democratisation and political *abertura*. At the same time, the weakness of the parties, (other than the PRI), made it rational for the regime to channel into the electoral arena the political demands of sectors that during those decades grew outside the corporatist structures and networks, essentially the middle classes. It was the deep economic crisis of the 1980s which launched some of these sectors against the regime, and they found in the electoral arena the mechanisms and means of pressure adequate for their protests. However, these pressures "from below" that characterised other transitions,¹⁹ were relatively absent in Mexico and circumscribed to some urban middle sectors in the north of the country. By opening further the electoral arena the protests of such sectors were successfully channelled therein.

The major opponent was not a mobilised civil society, but political parties that were increasingly structuring themselves and redefining their identities.²⁰ All this permitted the regime to maintain in all the previous electoral reforms the ultimate control over the political arena, while at the same time negotiating with the parties for relatively better conditions in which to enter into the Federal Congress. These features are precisely the ones which characterised the Mexican protracted transition.²¹

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.9.

¹⁹ See for instance the analysis of Timothy Garton Ash on the popular movements and the unions activities in Poland and Hungary that gave a strong element of popular pressure "from below" to the transitions in those countries. Timothy Garton Ash, *We the People. The Revolution of 89*, Cambridge, Granta Books, 1990.

²⁰ Maybe the only two moments when there was visibly a popular civil society element, completely autonomous from parties, during the aftermath of the 1986 earthquake that destroyed a large number of neighbourhoods in Mexico City. People protested spontaneously before a quite inoperative government that was caught by surprise. The other moment was during the 1988 elections. Cardenas, the candidate of the then FDN, was able to mobilise and gather a large number of groups that took the squares and the streets in his support, though without having received any resources from the Cardenas coalition.

²¹ See Chapter Three. Todd Eisenstadt has remarked that in such forms of transitions "it appears that democratization is a 'war of attrition' of the authoritarian incumbents and the opposition parties over the micro-institutional foundations of the transition. The locus of change, rather than being a fissure between hard-liners and soft-liners within the authoritarian coalition prior to authoritarian breakdown and the signing of a society-wide pact, seems rather to take the form of continuous and prolonged struggles over the formal institutional playing field" (Eisenstadt, [2000], p.4).

The Reform of 1996 altered those conditions and at the same time it brought to a close the political liberalisation process, since the regime negotiated and passed a law that secured the conditions for free, fair and competitive elections organised by a truly autonomous and independent electoral authority. The Reform of 1996 recognises that any artificial maintenance of the PRI in power would be politically volatile (the emergence of the *Zapatistas* and other guerrilla groups were clear signs of it), and that opposition parties were mature enough to dispute the regime's access to power. However, other short term considerations must be explained.

Firstly, the economic crisis of 1994-5 destroyed the confidence that remained in the adequate economic performance of PRI governments. This confidence had been the last element for maintaining a minimum of legitimacy, since by then the old corporatist structure was seriously eroded and the revolutionary discourse (which emphasised social development) was useless.²² Thus, any attempt to seek legitimacy under the principles of social justice and developmental nationalism was unthinkable. Secondly, if during the Salinas administration people believed that the economy started to function relatively well and that solid bases were sustaining it, as the propaganda emphasised, giving the president a high level of support (72 percent according to the newspaper *Reforma*'s survey in October 1994),²³ the 1994-5 collapse, plus the further scandals that implicated his family in murders and other illicit activities, finally drove the whole *Priista* political class into discredit and chaos. Under such circumstances, the President's closest circle seemed to have decided that the best alternative was to opt for a complete electoral openness through which political unrest could be channelled.

By means of the conditions set up by the Reform of 1996, competition became more equitable and fair, and it also provided the possibility for using, in systematic and regular ways, political marketing techniques in the campaigns by all parties involved. The electoral landscape seemed to have completely transformed into a modern arena of competition. For the first time in Mexican history, the electoral process seemed to contain

²² The depth of the crisis had serious consequences until the end of the period studied here. Still in the year 2000, as a study of the newspaper *La Jornada* expressed, real wages in Mexico have decreased 41% since 1988 (*La Jornada*, May 22 2000).

²³ See Chapter 3.

the three essential ingredients for a contested competition: the process was open, relatively fair and truly competitive.

The 1997 and 2000 Elections

After the 1996 Reform, the electoral processes created a new arena in which the political leadership increasingly owed their position more to the approval and support of the bases and voters and less to the approval and support from the centre, i.e. the Executive Power. Political accountability was finally emerging since competition amongst the parties was real. Moreover, the political figures that began to compete for their positions became increasingly more representative of the demands of their supporters. Even *Priista*'s newly elected officials seemed to be willing to replace their traditional roles as controllers of political demands and docile servants of the central Executive for a more active role in favour of the local interests of their constituencies.²⁴

The new conditions for competition took place within the context of economic disrupt and political scandals involving PRI members. Moreover, to the already precarious situation of the PRI was added the fact that in 1996 the party approved of the raising of VAT from 10 to 15 percent, a measure that was obviously highly unpopular. This was the situation under which the race for the government of Mexico City started. For the first time in history, Mexico City's citizens were able to freely choose their governor and this gave to such an electoral process a more complex dimension and generated more expectations than most normal mid-term election. Along with the government of Mexico City, the Federal Congress was to be partially renewed and local congresses, municipalities and some governors were going to be elected also.

It is possible to say that the Elections of 1997 were the first ones of the post-liberalisation period and the first ones in which the presence of the three largest parties was relatively equal, at least in Mexico City. In spite of certain minor incidents, the role played by the broadcasting media became crucial for making the conditions of elections quite balanced at least in the case of the Mexico City race for government, and for convoking the

²⁴ In this sense, in some states the local PRI refused the imposition of candidates from the centre, organising in turn primary processes among local *Priista* members in order to choose their best candidate. The case of Chihuahua in 1998 is perhaps the best example.

population to vote and participate.²⁵ The overall participation reached almost 60 percent of the 52 million 200 thousand registered citizens (Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5). At the national level, the PRI was the party that obtained more votes, since it was “the rival to be defeated” by opposition parties, and was still important with strong support, especially in rural areas. However, it lost the majority in the Chamber of Deputies and in Mexico City it experienced a bitter defeat.

Table 6.3
National Voting for Parties to the Federal Congress in 1997

Party	Million Votes	Percentage
PRI	10.050	38.86%
PAN	6.980	26.99%
PRD	6.620	25.59%
PVEM	0.998	3.86%
PT	0.663	2.56%
PFCRN	0.292	1.13%
PDM	0.173	0.67%
PPS	0.088	0.34%

Source: IFE: www.ife.org.mx Resultados Electorales 1997.

Table 6.4
Composition of the Chamber of Deputies for the LVII Legislative Period, 1997-2000*

Party	Total Number of Seats	Majority Deputies	PR Deputies
PRI	239	164	75
PRD	125	70	55
PAN	122	65	57
PVEM	8	0	8
PT	6	1	5

* The PPS, PFCRN, and the PDM lost their registry as national political parties, surviving only as local parties.

Source: Elaborated with data collected from *Directorio de la LVII Legislatura de la Cámara de Diputados* and IFE's internet webpage: www.ife.org.mx

²⁵ See Chapters Seven and Eight.

Table 6.5
Composition of the Senate for the LVII Legislative Period, 1997-2000*

Party	Total Number of Senators	PR Senators
PRI	77	12
PAN	32	9
PRD	13	8
PVEM	1	1
PT	1	1
INDEPENDENTS	3	1*

* Former member of the PVEM.

Source: Elaborated with data from *Directorio de la LVIII Legislatura de la Cámara de Diputados* and IFE's internet webpage: www.ife.org.mx

The PRI obtained the lowest total number of votes in its history and lost the simple majority in the Chamber of Deputies for the first time in history (in 1988 it obtained 265 Deputies, equivalent to 53 percent), though it was still the largest minority party. To pass regulations that required a simple majority vote in Congress, negotiations with the opposition were mandatory. The only advantage that the PRI retained was that it could still block opposition law initiatives considered to be disadvantageous for the regime with its majority in the Senate, though the 1997 electoral defeat of the PRI was magnified because it lost the first electoral race for the Government of Mexico City. The twice nominated presidential candidate Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas of the PRD won that crucial election with more than 47 percent of the votes, followed very far behind by the PRI candidate, Alfredo Del Mazo, with only 25 percent. The PRD also won in all of 40 Mexico City's electoral districts, and obtained a total of 44.5 percent of the votes to the Local Legislative Assembly.

Immediately after the elections the results were accepted by all major political figures. President Zedillo declared on July 7th 1997, one day after the elections, that from then on no one could contend that in Mexico there was still an official regime's party,²⁶ a statement that was still quite arguable. Nevertheless, a great deal of important changes slowly altered the political landscape in Mexico. To start with and to put it simply: while in 1982 the PRI controlled 91 percent of all popular election charges in the country, after

²⁶ *La Jornada*, July 7th 1997, front page.

1997 that party only controlled 54 percent of them.²⁷ However, the electoral results showed a quite heterogeneous country where regional disparities, in terms of electoral competition testified that democracy was more a northern than southern phenomenon as well as being a more urban than rural characteristic of late twentieth century Mexico. The unanimity that prevailed during the PRI hegemony was thus replaced by a political life that developed at different speeds and that showed the dramatic challenges that the opposition parties were to overcome in order to consolidate a stronger tri-partite system, since the PRI was still the only party with true national presence in all corners of the country. Political competition at local and regional levels involved generally only one of the two opposition parties that was strong enough to challenge the PRI. In Northern states political competition occurred usually between the PRI and the PAN, whereas in some Southern states –an exception being Yucatan, due to its particular history—the competition took place mostly between PRI and PRD. An exception was Mexico City. Further elections maintained that regional electoral map, even the 2000 elections, when at the end the most significant confrontation occurred between the PRI's and the PAN's candidates.

The 2000 electoral process can be considered as the end of the transition. In general terms, the norms regulating competition amongst the parties and political figures, were to be tested in a general electoral process. Since the 1996 Electoral Reform the last controls over the electoral arena were removed from the regime's hands and more equitable conditions were secured for competition amongst the parties. However, the essential consequence of political accountability, (the peaceful replacement of one government for another at the will of the majority), was to be tested at the federal level for the very first time. The 2000 election was not a "founding election" in the same way as the electoral processes in, say, Brazil or Argentina in the mid-1980s, since by that time opposition was already controlling the government of many states, but it offered the possibilities for ousting the PRI from the presidential office.

The combination of these factors along with the emergence of stronger competition amongst the parties during the process and the acceptance of the electoral results by all

²⁷ Maria Amparo Casar and Ricardo Raphael De la Madrid, "Las elecciones de 1998: la distribución del poder político en México", in *Nexos*, No. 247, July, Mexico City 1998, p.42.

1997 that party only controlled 54 percent of them.²⁷ However, the electoral results showed a quite heterogeneous country where regional disparities, in terms of electoral competition testified that democracy was more a northern than southern phenomenon as well as being a more urban than rural characteristic of late twentieth century Mexico. The unanimity that prevailed during the PRI hegemony was thus replaced by a political life that developed at different speeds and that showed the dramatic challenges that the opposition parties were to overcome in order to consolidate a stronger tri-partite system, since the PRI was still the only party with true national presence in all corners of the country. Political competition at local and regional levels involved generally only one of the two opposition parties that was strong enough to challenge the PRI. In Northern states political competition occurred usually between the PRI and the PAN, whereas in some Southern states –an exception being Yucatan, due to its particular history—the competition took place mostly between PRI and PRD. An exception was Mexico City. Further elections maintained that regional electoral map, even the 2000 elections, when at the end the most significant confrontation occurred between the PRI's and the PAN's candidates.

The 2000 electoral process can be considered as the end of the transition. In general terms, the norms regulating competition amongst the parties and political figures, were to be tested in a general electoral process. Since the 1996 Electoral Reform the last controls over the electoral arena were removed from the regime's hands and more equitable conditions were secured for competition amongst the parties. However, the essential consequence of political accountability, (the peaceful replacement of one government for another at the will of the majority), was to be tested at the federal level for the very first time. The 2000 election was not a "founding election" in the same way as the electoral processes in, say, Brazil or Argentina in the mid-1980s, since by that time opposition was already controlling the government of many states, but it offered the possibilities for ousting the PRI from the presidential office.

The combination of these factors along with the emergence of stronger competition amongst the parties during the process and the acceptance of the electoral results by all

²⁷ Maria Amparo Casar and Ricardo Raphael De la Madrid, "Las elecciones de 1998: la distribución del poder político en México", in *Nexos*, No. 247, July, Mexico City 1998, p.42.

the political figures involved, made the elections of July 2nd 2000 a formal finishing point for the long protracted transition process in Mexico. The clarity of the rules and the fairness of the conditions for competition in 2000 generated the strongest expectations ever for an electoral process. The parties invested large amounts of resources in advertising and in promoting their candidates through various means.²⁸ Moreover, the PRI organised an internal primary process to select its candidate from amongst four notable politicians (out of which, it must be said, only two had any real chances of winning). Though, at the end, the candidate who was closest to President Zedillo was nominated, he was selected by the votes of more than seven million individuals in an open election for all citizens. In spite of some minor irregularities in the PRI internal selection process, its victorious candidate, Francisco Labastida, gained a certain air of legitimacy that no previous PRI candidate had ever gained before.

The impact of the PRI internal election made the two largest opposition parties attempt the creation of a common electoral front to challenge the PRI. At the time when the PRI was in the middle of an internal competition among its pre-election candidates, the opposition parties initiated talks about the possibility of creating such national coalition to present, at least at the presidential level, a single candidate. However, at the end the divergent interests of the leading PAN and PRD politicians destroyed all possibilities for such coalition by early September 1999.²⁹ Nevertheless, the PAN and the PRD separately negotiated alliances with other minor parties. The PAN coalesced with the Greens (PVEM) in what was denominated the Alliance for Change (AC), while the PRD created an Alliance for Mexico (AM) with the *Partido del Trabajo*, PT, and the recently created *Convergencia Democratica*, CD, *Sociedad Nacionalista*, PSN, and *Alianza Social*, PAS. In the elections, there also competed –and lost their register, since they could not obtain at least 2 percent of the voting—the *Partido del Centro Democratico*, PCD, *Partido Democracia Social*, PDS, and the old PARM.

²⁸ See Chapters Seven and Eight.

²⁹ See for instance the decision of the PRD to nominate Cardenas as his candidate for the presidency in September 8th 1999, and the reactions that the PAN's strongest candidate Vicente Fox had against the creation of an alliance that same day. See *La Jornada*, September 9th 1999.

On the election day the voting participation reached 65 percent of all registered voters.³⁰ The votes received by each party on the three federal elections—for President, for the Senate and for the Chamber—are shown on Table 6.5 below. As one can see, the real competition occurred between the PRI and the AC in all three processes. Table 6.6 shows the composition of the Chamber of Deputies after the 2000 elections. The PRI obtained 42 percent of the seats, the Alliance for Change 44.8 percent and the Alliance for Mexico 13.2 percent.

Table 6.5
Total Voting and Percentage for Presidential and Federal Congress Elections in July 2000

	Political Party/Coalition					
	AC*	PRI**	AM***	PCD	PARM	PDS
President	15,988,544	13,576,189	6,259,018	208,527	157,119	592,072
	42.52%	36.10%	16.64%	0.55%	0.42%	1.57%
Majority Senators	14,203,588	13,692,186	7,024,999	521,086	274,766	669,650
	38.11%	36.74%	18.85%	1.40%	0.74%	1.80%
Majority Deputies	14,212,476	13,720,453	6,948,204	428,577	272,425	698,683
	38.23%	36.91%	18.69%	1.15%	0.73%	1.88%

AC Candidate: Vicente Fox Quesada; ** PRI Candidate: Francisco Labastida Ochoa; ***AM Candidate: Cuauhtemoc CardenasS.

Source: Instituto Federal Electoral, Mexico.

Table 6.6
Composition of the Chamber of Deputies for the LVIII Legislative Period, 2000-2003

Party/Coalition	Majority Deputies	PR Deputies	Total Number of Deputies
PRI	131	79	210
Alliance for Change (PAN-PVEM)	143	81	224
Alliance for Mexico (PRD-PT-PSN-PAS-CD)	26	40	66
Total	300	200	500

Source: Instituto Federal Electoral, Mexico.

³⁰ At a local level, the race for the governments of Guanajuato and Morelos were won by the PAN, while in Mexico City the PRD repeated its 1997 victory

In the Senate the PRI obtained 45.31 percent of the seats, while the Alliance for Change received 41.40 percent and the Alliance for Mexico the rest 13.28 percent. These results correspond to the following number of senators per party/coalition:

Table 6.7
Composition of the Senate for the LVIII Legislative Period, 2000-2003

Party/Coalition	Majority Senators	PR Senators	Total Number of Senators
PRI	45	13	58
Alliance for Change (PAN-PVEM)	40	13	53
Alliance for Mexico (PRD-PT-PSN-PAS-CD)	11	6	17
Total	96	32	128

Source: Instituto Federal Electoral, Mexico.

In the presidential race, voters supported the alliance led by the PAN candidate Vicente Fox, who emerged as a charismatic and popular politician as he was representative of precisely the opposite of the traditional PRI candidates: his vernacular style made him appear more as the common-man rather than the more stereotypical stiff politician. The vote for the PAN can be explained not only because of the strength and the coherence of its ideology, but most of all for the fact that Fox was the candidate that, according to the polls, was more successful in promoting the anti-PRI sentiments along with the desire for change. During most of his campaign, Fox insisted that he was the candidate of change, and even his coalition with other parties took that name.

At the same time, the situation for the PRI's candidate was very difficult not only because the political and economic unrest and instability that has been already mentioned in this chapter, but also because this candidate was not able to break with the past. Historically one of the actions that helped to restore the claims for legitimacy within a regime that did not allow true party competition for decades, was that even though the president in turn had the ultimate say in nominating the candidate, as soon as the nomination was made, the nominee immediately started to ground his (it was never a female) political project upon the denouncement of the past and the mistakes committed by the actual

government. This attitude which was common to all PRI candidates was fundamental in giving hope to the population that "this time, things would improve". One must also bear in mind that traditionally the official candidate was very seldom a close member of the president's political group. The candidate was chosen among the secretaries of the cabinet, but the selection was also made amongst members of other groups of the "revolutionary family", as this was crucial for unity. Also this process facilitated criticisms against the recent past during the campaigns, and allowed that such criticisms were not merely part of a formal protocol, but part of more substantial differences in the forms of perceiving politics among different groups. All this was possible because there was no true electoral competition, so the competition for power took place inside the party. Thus, in spite of being part of the same party as the president (and of having been members of his cabinet), the candidates wanted to make clear that they had the will to mend their predecessor's failures and mistakes with new and different programmes. It was precisely this break with the past among *Priistas* that candidates could no longer practice once the electoral arena became a true ground for competition. It was to the opposition to play such role, not to the PRI's candidate. Thus, it was opposition who was already criticising the government and preventing the PRI candidate from taking any credible critical position (especially since he himself had been Secretary of *Gobernacion* in the cabinet). Moreover, opposition candidates, but especially Fox, were able to position Francisco Labastida as the "candidate of continuity", being able thus to polarise the elections between two clear options: continuity or change. Watching the electoral results in which the vote for Fox amounted to 43.43 percent, it was not difficult to see what the electors wanted. For Labastida it became impossible to make a break with the past especially after all the support received from President during the PRI primary.

Whatever the reasons that moved the voters to support opposition to the PRI, what is important to note is that the Elections of 2000 finally consolidated the electoral arena as the place in which political demands could be peacefully and institutionally channelled, and as a space for disputing and competing for power. The scholar Héctor Aguilar Camín characterised these changes in 1997 in the following way,

Maybe all the epoch changes that Mexico is living could be seen as a long good-bye to the Mexican Revolution, a long good-bye to one of the most successful and stable moments in the

country's history, a time of deep political agreement, high economic performance, and powerful institutionalisation; an epoch that, by reiteratively using the formulae of its past successes before actually new situations, transformed its virtuous circles into vicious circles, its public savings into debt, its clientelistic consensus into authoritarian corruption, its political leadership into excessive governmental controls, its balance into unsteadiness, and the expectations of its citizens into public unrest.³¹

However, at that very same time, the outcome of the Elections of 2000 posed enormous challenges to the parties since the nature of the traditional tri-partite system was altered. The PRI, once ousted from office, were to face the challenge to create a true centre of power in order to elaborate and present a coherent political project and to maintain discipline among its numerous federal deputies and senators, its state controlled congresses and local governments. The president used to play the cohesive (and controlling) role, and now it is the party –its top cadres—who will have to gain the strength and the ability to do so. The PAN now has to define its new relations with both its parliamentary group and the federal executive, which is not a simple task given the fact that inside the party many believe that President Fox (a PAN newcomer) “imposed himself” on the traditional cadres, and such resentment can bear a high price to a government when seeking support from its party in congress. The PRD, who came third in the electoral outcomes, must re-define its ideological discourse based upon a reality very much inspired by the 1968 student movement ideas (anti-imperialism, Althusserian socialist views, ideological discourse based upon values that impede them to negotiate with any other political organisation –since negotiation is regarded for many inside the PRD as treason), and lacking in real political and economic alternatives for a quickly changing society.

What is clear is that finally in México, political differences seemed to be agreed upon through the electoral arena, (as one of the most important channels), in which the parties are given the main responsibility for articulating demands. The setting is thus agreed upon, now only time will prove its adequacy, since what is still missing is the negotiations on the content of new rules for political life.

³¹ Héctor Aguilar Camín, “México al fin del milenio, a mitad del camino”, in *Nexus* no. 239, November, Mexico City 1997.

Chapter Seven

Mexican TV in the Late 1990s: An Accelerated Openness

In spite of the constant growth of political opposition in Mexico throughout the 1980s, this was certainly not reflected on the TV screens. Even during the competed elections of 1994, television presented only partial coverage that explicitly favoured the official party. However, in sharp contrast with what has been its traditionally closed handling of political information, after 1996 private television started to play a crucial role as a more independent source of political information. These changes were noticeable both during the campaigns of 1997 and the electoral race of 2000, when the information presented on the TV screens was not biased in favour of the PRI and its candidates, but instead was quite impartial.

The explanation for such openness has to do with the emergence of a competition scheme that seriously altered the conditions of the quasi-monopoly in which Mexican private TV had been developing for decades. Though a new private terrestrial TV network appeared in 1992 out of the privatisation of the public TV network Imevision, it was not until 1995-1996 that true competition between the two largest private consortiums—Televisa and TV Azteca—developed its most fierce aspects. Competition forced both networks to invest more, to implement new investment and publicity policies, and to seek new alliances to strengthen their positions and raise the ratings.

Additionally, in 1996 a new electoral reform was passed that granted the political parties the largest amount of resources ever for investing in political advertising. This proved to be highly favourable for fostering the openness of television, since the networks started disputing those large sums of money granted to the parties by the IFE. The issuing of a new electoral reform in 1996 not only reiterated the recommendations of 1994 on the ways in which they media should present information on the campaigns and implemented new mechanisms for monitoring that information, but most decisively the Reform of 1996 provided the political parties with more air-time on television and the largest amount of resources ever to be spent on commercial adverts and publicity. This situation coincided

with the increasing importance of political marketing tools as a means of developing political campaigns.

Increasing competition in the TV market and the Reform of 1996

As was discussed in Chapter Four, though there existed in Mexico other terrestrial TV options, including a public channel, their audiences were so low that for all practical matters the creation of Televisa in 1973 consolidated a quasi-monopolistic television service in the country, operating with enormous profits, protection and advantages. Moreover, during the following twenty years Televisa experienced spectacular growth allowing it to successfully expand its satellite coverage over almost all the national territory¹—Televisa was already transmitting through satellite in the U.S. by the end of the 1970s²—and many other countries worldwide.³ By the beginning of the 1990s Televisa inaugurated its Direct To Home TV or DTH in order to cover the Latin American market.⁴

¹ Since 1985 Televisa profited from the Mexican satellite system (first the Morelos I and II and later of the Solidaridad I and II) to cover the Mexican territory with its signals. In November 1993 Televisa received the concessions to operate 62 television stations that were part of the IMEVISION system.

² In May 1980 the firm signed up a contract with the Secretariat of Communications and Transport through which an agreement was reached to install 80 land stations for satellite services, of which Televisa would finance the building of 46. The agreement established that Televisa would give those stations to the government in exchange for priority of transmission when only one channel could be sent through those means and for a discount on the tariffs charged by the Secretariat for the transmission of television signals. At the end, Televisa only installed 32 stations. (Mejía Barquera, "Del Canal 4 a Televisa", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas (coord.), *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana*, Mexico City: Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa, 1998, pgs.52-53).

³ In the 1980s Televisa also expanded and consolidated important positions in the U.S., Latin America and Europe. By 1986, after the decree of a U.S. Judicial Power that obliged Azcárraga to sell his partnership in the Spanish International Communication Corporation, his businesses in the United States were re-allocated to UNIVISA, a corporation that controlled the following firms: ECO, Spanish International Network, FONOVISA, GALAVISION, PROTELE, Grupo Industrial UNIVISA, VIDEOVISA and Univisa Satellite Corporation. By the beginning of the 1990s Televisa continued its expansion. In December 1991 Televisa announced the acquisition of 49 percent of the shares of the Chilean TV network Megavisión. In January 1993 it acquired 50 percent of the shares of the Pan American Satellite Co. In June that year, it bought 25 percent of the shares of the National Bolivia ATB-Network. In February 1988, UNIVISION was sold to the firm Hallmark Cards, Inc., but in 1992, Televisa, associated with Venivision of Venezuela and with the American entrepreneur Jerrold Perenchio bought the UNIVISION network of Miami with 581 stations in the country. Though at first Televisa owned 25 of the shares, after a public share bid in 1996, the consortium kept only 19.8 percent of it. (*Ibid.*, pgs56-57; Grupo Televisa, *Informe Anual 1996*, Mexico City, Bolsa Mexicana de Valores, 1997, p.23).

⁴ For the provision of DTH services Televisa associated with the Medcom enterprise of Clemente Serna, the old partner of Emilio Azcárraga Milmo in Radio Programas de México. In Mexico, two DTH TV systems started to operate at the end of 1996. The competitor with Televisa's SKY—as its DTH service was named—is

In November 1995 Televisa announced the launching of its DTH service, called SKY Entertainment Services in association with Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation and the gigantic Brazilian O'Globo network, each contributing 30 percent of the shares. The remaining 10 percent was invested by Tele Communications International, Inc. SKY who started operating by the end of 1996. Televisa also explored the European DTH markets and by November that year it announced a project—Plataforma de Televisión Digital—in which Televisa became a partner of Telefónica de España, the largest investor (35%), Radio y TV Española (17%), Antena 3 (17%), Televisión de Catalunya (6%), Telemadrid (4%), Canal 9 (2%), Televisión de Galicia (1%) and Unidad Editorial (1%).⁵ This expansion to new communication technologies brought Televisa to the level of a true multimedia corporation.

However, in the Mexican terrestrial TV system the main competitor for Televisa appeared after the privatising in 1992 of the public network Imevisión, which consisted of Channel 7 and Channel 13. The network was renamed Television Azteca, TV Azteca, and it immediately sought to position itself in the TV market with a very similar programming offer as Televisa's. Moreover, its CEO, Ricardo Salinas Pliego, explicitly announced his wish to dispute Televisa's position. TV Azteca invested more than 20 million USD in expanding the coverage capacity of his Channel 13 by 65 percent and of his Channel 7 by 40 percent.⁶ Between 1993 and 1997, TV Azteca increased the number of stations for Channel 13 from 90 to 128 and for Channel 7 from 78 to 120.⁷ The main policies of the network were directed towards increasing its audiences and to eventually producing their own programmes at top rating times (between 19:30 and 22:30) which by 1994 was only 24

Multivisión, owned by Joaquín Vargas, who allied with Hughes Electronics in order to introduce its alternative DTH service called DirecTV. However, by 1997 they still did not have a very large clientele (estimated in 450 thousand, according to...). One important reason might have been the prices for subscription. For instance, Televisa's SKY hiring cost in 1997 was of US \$ 370, while Multivisión's DirecTV cost was of US \$ 319. In both cases, the subscriber has to pay a monthly rent that in 1998 was around US\$ 25 that for a vast majority of the population it means a sum of money that they cannot afford paying. See Alejandro Olmos, "La TV en 1996: nexos políticos, pugnas y sensacionalismo", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, no. 47, February-March. Mexico City, Fundación Manuel Buendía, 1997.

⁵ By the end of that year. Antena 3 decided to separate from the group, and both Televisa and RTVE increased their shares to 25.5 percent. See Mejía Barquera (1998), p. 60.

⁶ Alejandro Olmos, "Del Canal 13 a TV Azteca", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas (coord.), *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana*, Mexico City, Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa, 1998, p. 130.

⁷ Mejía Barquera, *La Crónica de Hoy*, August 25th 1997, p. 22.

percent. They were successful, since three years later they were already producing 83 percent of its programming at top rating times.⁸

In 1994 TV Azteca incorporated local programming in the states of Nuevo León, Jalisco, Baja California and Guerrero in order to have a better anchor at a regional level. Three years later TV Azteca had stations operating with local programming in Tijuana, Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, La Paz, Torreón, Monterrey, San Luis Potosí, León, Guadalajara, Toluca, Mexico City, Mérida, Veracruz, Cancun, Cuernavaca, Puebla, Tabasco and Acapulco, which represented an increase of 64 percent with respect to 1996.⁹ In the same fashion as Televisa, TV Azteca started its expansion to the US,¹⁰ Latin America,¹¹ and into other communication technologies.¹² The value of the network increased from US \$ 645 million, the amount paid by Salinas Pliego in 1992, to US \$ 2.4 billion in 1997. Also in the case of the news broadcast programmes, TV Azteca decided to create a specific division in charge of co-ordinating all its information and research programmes.¹³ In June 24th 1996, this new division, called *Fuerza Informativa Azteca*, was formed under the co-ordination of the journalists Sergio Sarmiento (who was also the Vice-President of News) and Maribel Diaz (Director of News in TV Azteca). At the same time a new programme dedicated entirely to information and entertainment, *¡Hola México!* was launched.

The rapid expansion of TV Azteca eventually came to represent a serious competition for Televisa, even in areas where the latter traditionally dominated like the soap-operas, and eventually led both networks to transmit sensationalist programmes in order to maintain higher ratings than its counterpart.¹⁴ By mid-1996 the competition was transformed in what

⁸ Sabás Huesca Rebolledo, "La noticia por televisión", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas and María del Pilar Ramírez (coords.), *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana*, Mexico City, Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa, 1999, p.85.

⁹ *Azteca Avances*, information publication of TV Azteca, no.24, February 1997, pgs.4-5.

¹⁰ In 1996 it associated with the US firm Telemundo, rival of UNIVISION, in order to produce programmes and series.

¹¹ Up until 1998, TV Azteca bought shares in Channel 35 of Guatemala (60%), Channel 12 of El Salvador (75%), and Channel 13 of Dominican Republic (50%). However, the expansion to these countries was not limited only to television, but also to those of radio communication services and department stores. *El Universal*, Espectáculos, April 27th 1997, p.5. In January 1998 it acquired 75 percent of the shares of Channel 4 of Chile, known as *La Red* (*La Jornada*, January 9th 1998). That year in April it also bought 35 percent of the shares of Channel 4 of Costa Rica (*La Jornada*, April 11th 1998).

¹² It also launched its records producer Azteca Music, S.A.

¹³ *El Universal*, Espectáculos, June 22nd 1996, p.11.

¹⁴ An example of this crude competition occurred in 1996, when TV Azteca launched a televised version of the most sensationalist tabloids, *Expediente 13*, 22:30, shortly followed by *Ciudad Desnuda*, dedicated to

was called by the press "the war of the TV".¹⁵ It was noticeable that during this conflict, both networks published long insertions in the newspapers on which both cited different institutions dedicated to measuring ratings and public opinion, like the famous Brazilian IBOPE or Nielsen International, in which each alleged their victory with regard to viewer preferences. Each one also declared the inaccuracy of their competitor's statistics. However, an independent study revealed that by mid-1996 TV Azteca's news broadcast, *Hechos*, had a 23 percent higher viewer rating than Televisa's *24 Horas*.¹⁶

Of course, the increasing competition among the networks, as reflected in their programming, their mutual attacks and their fierce fights for clientele was also reflected in the publicity market by 1996 and 1997. From 1994 to 1996 TV Azteca had raised the number of its clientele from 52 to 265,¹⁷ and this naturally affected the shares of Televisa in the publicity market. For instance, in 1995 TV Azteca signed a contract with Unilever, one

showing bloody accidents, crimes, arrests and the like, with such success that the latter was transmitted twice a day (leaving for the evening transmission the crudest scenes). Televisa counter-attacked and produced *Cerezo Rojo*, *A sangre fría* and *A través del video*. By July 1996 the networks were dedicating more than 24 hours per week to such programmes (See Olmos [1997], p.7). The competition was leading the networks to present more brutal stories with more explicit scenes in order to increase their audiences. This attitude provoked President Zedillo himself to declare several occasions that such programmes should not be transmitted on TV due to their high degree of explicit violence. Though this statement was supported by religious and families' organisations, it became controversial at a time when many other groups were defending the freedom of the press. In June 7th 1996, the Day of the Freedom of the Press, President Zedillo delivered a speech in which he underlined the need for establishing ethic codes to normalise the contents of the programming, though he insisted on the fact that such codes should be designed by the media themselves (See *La Jornada*, June 8th 1996). The idea was immediately supported by PRI, PAN and PRD Senators, entrepreneurial leaders and other civil society organisations, such as the *A favor de Lo Mejor en Los Medios*. Moreover, these arguments were reiterated by both Zedillo and his Secretary of Gobernación, Emilio Chuayffert, during the Week of Radio Broadcasting in October (See their declarations in *Reforma*, October 15th 1996 and *El Financiero*, October 16th 1996). Though the networks did not cancel the transmissions of these programmes, they modified their content and became relatively more careful about the stories they presented.

¹⁵ This episode started during the first two weeks of July 1996 due to some declarations that the imprisoned brother of former President Carlos Salinas, Raúl, made to the Swiss Prosecutors who wanted to know the origin of the money he had in Swiss bank accounts. Raúl Salinas confessed to having made some business with Ricardo Salinas Pliego, the president of TV Azteca. This issue was used by Televisa to present a series of transmissions, most of them in its opinion programme *Detrás de la Noticia*, hosted by Ricardo Rocha, in which the goal was to show the irregularity of the credits with which Salinas Pliego made his businesses. TV Azteca replied with long programmes in which Sergio Sarmiento, the then Director of Broadcasts of that same network, interviewed Salinas Pliego with the clear intention of praising his honesty. Eventually, both networks resorted even to open insults and to the elaboration of negative propaganda, like the TV Azteca's programme *Este Enterado*, which entitled its transmission of July 8th "The cowardliness of Ricardo Rocha". The mutual attacks continued for the next months. Finally, by mid-October the reiterated interventions of the Secretary of Gobernación seemed to have helped to end the conflict (See *Reforma*, November 4th 1996).

¹⁶ The study cited was conducted by MORI de México, and was published by *Este País* in its edition of February 14th 1996.

¹⁷ Alberto Aguilar, "Nombres, nombres", in *Reforma*, September 10th 1996.

of the most prestigious publicity agencies,¹⁸ that represents such well known brands as Pond's, Angel Face, Brut, Zwan Food Products, and Clemente Jacques. For the first time, this company decided not to sign an exclusive contract with Televisa. Another example was the dispute over the transmission of football games. Formerly transmitted almost in exclusivity by Televisa (who also owned some football teams), in 1997 TV Azteca bought the rights to broadcast the matches from the stadiums of Cruz Azul, Neza, Santos, Celaya, León, besides owning 80 percent of the shares of Morelia and Veracruz football teams (which it sold in January 1999).¹⁹

One must remark that since 1994 TV Azteca began to offer its clientele an attractive publicity package known as the "Mexican Plan", an alternative to the "French Plan" offered by Televisa since 1981. The advantage of the former's plan was that the customer was to pay in relation to the real rating points of each programme. This meant that if a firm originally bought some spaces in a programme classified with 15 rating points, but after a transmission it did not reach that rating level, TV Azteca would compensate the difference with extra air-time. The outcome of this situation was that during 1997 Televisa's share of commercial publicity, whose total in 1996 was calculated in US \$ 1,250 million,²⁰ diminished by 14.9 percent, while that of TV Azteca raised by 18.5 percent.²¹ All this affected the economic performance of Televisa.²² A change in the business strategy of Televisa was necessary.

The company decided to concentrate on the production market and on financial efficiency.²³ Televisa announced the selling of its shares to some companies. It sold 37

¹⁸ According to the *Fortune* magazine, this firm is ranked number 38 among the 500 more influential world corporations. *Reforma*, October 1st 1996.

¹⁹ By the end of 1996, nine teams had signed with TV Azteca and the other nine remained with Televisa.

²⁰ *La Jornada*, October 30th 1996.

²¹ Alva de la Selva, "La televisión en 1997: expansión y lucha de poder", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, no.52, January-February, Mexico City, Fundación Manuel Buendía, 1998, p.7.

²² In December 1996 the total sells of Televisa were of \$11.5 billion pesos, while its debts raised to \$ 20 billion pesos (see *El Universal*, April 17th 1998).

²³ In October 1996 Manuel Rubiralta, who had been the president of Pepsi Cola Company in Mexico, was hired as the new director of the commercialisation area. At the same time, it hired well known actors and media personnel with proven experience in order to strengthen professionalism and secure higher ratings. In this way, for example, Guillermo Ochoa, an experienced communicator who had been fired in 1993 due to an interview he had with the leader of the oil workers that deeply infuriated President Salinas, was rehabilitated. Also two extremely popular Mexican artists, the pop singer Gloria Trevi and the composer and singer Juan Gabriel, were also hired again by Televisa after a ban of some years.

percent of its shares of the street publicity company Vendor by mid-1996,²⁴ and another 44 percent in June 1998.²⁵ Shortly afterwards, Televisa sold 51 percent of its shares to the private radio communications company Skytel.²⁶ The TV network decided to retain only the 28.8 percent of the shares of the world-wide satellite company PanAmSat and to sell the rest to Hughes Electronics Corporation.²⁷ Also, Televisa decided to capitalise on its cable TV company, Cablevision, by selling 49 percent of its shares to the strong Grupo Carso, owner of the telephone company Telmex.²⁸

In May 1997 the new Televisa President, Emilio Azcarraga Jean, announced what was called the "Televisa 2000 Strategic Plan" which was meant to reduce the operation costs of the company by USD \$ 270 million, to raise its audience, and to develop the DTH TV system.²⁹ With the application of this plan they expected annual savings of USD \$ 90 million for the period 1998-2000. Among other policies, Televisa's strategy emphasised a reduction in the salaries of its top executives, of over-time payments, and of travel expenses, as well as the re-negotiation of the conditions for renting buildings and other facilities, the better use of the spaces within the company, a decrease in the publicity expenditures of its music division, and the disappearance of some low circulation magazines.³⁰ By the beginning of 1999 Televisa was also designing policies to reduce its debts and to get fresh investments. Televisa reached further agreements with the Carso Group through which the later was supposed to invest more than USD \$ 160 million for the following four years in Televisa's projects.³¹

In the case of TV Azteca, though it was the main profiteer from the loses of Televisa,³² the strong competition brought some setbacks as well. The re-structuring of the firm during the 1995-1998 period was characterised by austerity. During the first semester of 1998 TV Azteca announced a 12 percent employee lay-off (400 labour posts disappeared).³³ Later

²⁴ *Reforma*, July 27th 1996.

²⁵ *La Jornada*, June 9th 1998.

²⁶ *El Nacional*, May 20th 1996.

²⁷ *La Jornada*, July 18th 1996, p.42.

²⁸ *Reforma*, October 9th 1996.

²⁹ *Reforma*, Negocios, May 22nd 1997.

³⁰ *La Jornada*, May 22nd 1997.

³¹ *La Jornada*, February 2nd 1999.

³² For instance, during the transmission of the World Cup in France during the Summer of 1998, TV Azteca obtained USD \$ 57 million in advertising, while Televisa "only" USD \$ 50 million (*Reforma*, July 31st 1998).

³³ *El Financiero*, March 31st 1998.

that year, in September, it was confirmed that the total expenditures of the company would be cut down to a minimum.³⁴ As a consequence it cancelled the formation of a merging firm which would manage all the businesses of Salinas Pliego; it reduced by 10 percent the salaries of its executives; it cut by 20 percent its administration and selling expenditures; it postponed the expansion of the firm to other Latin American countries other than the ones in which it had already invested; and the total amount of the company's investment was to be trimmed down from \$ US 35 to \$ US 25 million.³⁵

One must note that it was within this general situation of strong competition and economic re-structuring of the TV networks that the CEO of Televisa, Emilio Azcárraga Milmo, died (April 16th 1997) at the age of sixty-six.³⁶ His son, Emilio Azcárraga Jean, who entered in the company in 1991,³⁷ was already general director of the Grupo Televisa since March 4th of that year, a charge given to him by his father, who also hired Guillermo Cañedo White as chairman of the board of administration. However, after his father's death, Azcárraga Jean started to take complete control of the company.³⁸ Firstly, he took over the post of Cañedo White on the board of administration. The pressure Azcárraga Jean put on Cañedo White obliged he and his brother (who also worked in Televisa) to sell his family shares to Azcárraga Jean and leave the company.³⁹ Then, the young CEO created an Executive Committee in order to "strengthen the direction of the corporation through a more professional and specialised style, instead of the previous relying on the individual

³⁴ Alejandro Olmos, "Algunos protagonistas de la televisión", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas and María Del Pilar Sevilla (coords.), *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana II*, Mexico City, Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa, 1999, p.314.

³⁵ It should be noticed, however, that there are other businesses in which Salinas Pliego participates, like Grupo Elektra (a retailing department store), Tiendas Hecali (low-cost clothing stores), Biper (private radio communication services), Radiocel (mobile phone systems) and Unefon (radio communication services for enterprises).

³⁶ A biography on the life and the ways in which Emilio Azcarraga Milmo built Televisa: Claudia Fernandez, *El Tigre: Emilio Azcarraga y su imperio Televisa*, Mexico City, Grijalbo, 1999.

³⁷ That year he entered the management board of the company due to a cession of shares (10 percent) that his father had made on his behalf. Afterwards he became Vice-president of the North Western Division of Televisa, Vice-president of Programming and in 1996 Chief of Operations of Televisa.

³⁸ Several changes in the composition of the board took place and, of course, in the ownership of the shareholdings. At the moment of the death of Azcárraga Milmo in April 1997 the shares of Televisa were distributed as follows: Azcárraga Milmo, 41.4 percent; Alejandro Burillo Azcárraga, 14 percent; Miguel Alemán Velasco and his son, 14.4 percent; Emilio Azcárraga Jean, 10 percent; Paula Cussi Presa Matute, 10 percent; José Antonio Cañedo White, 5.1 percent; and Guillermo Cañedo White, 5.1 percent (see *Proceso*, n.1081, July 20th 1997, p.7).

³⁹ By July that year the shareholders had changed as following: Azcárraga Jean, 52 percent; Miguel Alemán and son 14.4 percent; Alejandro Burillo, 14 percent; and other shareholders the rest of the shares.

leadership [that characterised the age of Azcárraga Milmo]".⁴⁰ In May 1997, Azcárraga Jean announced a strategy to reduce expenditure by around \$ US 200 million and in the operation costs by 35 percent by the year 2000.⁴¹

Along with this change towards more efficiency in the economic and financial performance of the company, the new executives in Televisa decided to change the image of the company, (the traditional logo of the company was even replaced by a new more colourful one). In May 1997 the area of news broadcasts was totally re-structured and the new vice-president of the news division, Miguel Alemán Velasco, promised drastic changes to come in that area. Moreover, on Sunday November 9th 1997, *The Miami Herald* published an interview given by Azcárraga Jean in which he emphasised that,

Now there is an openness in the Mexican political system that requires an openness in the news broadcasts system as well. There will be a new form of conducting the news, a new rhythm, and a new format. It will be as if we had started all over again.⁴²

Shortly afterwards in July 25th, Emilio Azcarraga Jean transmitted a message within the closed-circuit system of the company to its more than 30 thousand employees in which he presented the new criteria that would guide the functions and the performance of Televisa. On that occasion he also answered some questions related to the traditional support of Televisa for the PRI. He expressly emphasised the freedom of the employees to vote for the party that they preferred, and that the attitude of the company in relation to all of the parties would be balanced.⁴³ As for the news broadcasts, the changes were quickly noticed. In January 19th 1998, after 27 years of being the most important and permanent news broadcast on the Mexican television –but also one that was highly identified with the PRI regime—*24 Horas* transmitted its last programme.⁴⁴ An episode in the development of

⁴⁰ Alva de la Selva (1998), p.5.

⁴¹ Azcárraga Jean also announced the sale of 14 percent of Televisa's shares in Univision and the closing of the Contemporary Art Cultural Centre, a museum and art gallery that Televisa inaugurated in 1986. Olmos (1999), p.302.

⁴² *The Miami Herald*, November 9th 1997.

⁴³ *Reforma*, July 26th 1997.

⁴⁴ An opinion survey conducted by the newspaper *Reforma* and published in January 18th 1998 reported that still in those days the large majority of the individuals interviewed considered *24 Horas* to have had either some or much influence on the political life of the country. Enrique Sánchez Ruiz, "Fin del antiguo régimen televisivo", in *Reforma*, January 18th 1998.

Mexican TV came to an end and Jacobo Zabludowsky, the anchorman of *24 Horas*, commented in relation to his imminent substitution that,

The news broadcasts reflect the situation that the country experiences, and today it is a moment when the lack of credibility affects the institutions, all broadcasts included, not only those of Televisa... In Mexico, today there is an *apertura* previously unknown and in this context there also emerges a new competitor, who we welcome... The news broadcasts were at many times influenced by the circumstances of the times. If we suffered from a loss of credibility, it may have happened as a consequence of such an influence.⁴⁵

Apparently, everyone inside the corporation wanted to emphasise that new policies should be implemented in order for it to become more competitive, and in many respects these new policies implied a rupture with the old compromises that the corporation had with the regime, which were based on the exclusion of alternative voices –and incomes—from the political arena. In relation to this point, Azcárraga Jean made a public declaration in March 20th 1998 in which he emphasised that the new policies of Televisa were to be completely different from those of the past, characterised by strong links to the PRI. He said that,

The relation between the government and the media has been long over... The old relation obeyed to a previous governmental structure... but today there is opposition and competition in the TV, whose outcome is a weaker and weaker manipulation of the information.⁴⁶

If such declarations were not enough to make the new policies of the company clear in relation to politics and to the ways political information was to be presented in the news broadcasts, in August 1998 Azcárraga Jean remarked again that,

I am not a politician, moreover, I do not understand much about it... I do not believe that having links with politicians would be beneficial for us in matters of our substantial concern. I believe in ratings.⁴⁷

What lies underneath of all these declarations is the recognition that economic competition was the most important concern for the company, and that to remain alien to the voices of other political alternatives was equivalent to losing competitiveness for the publicity market

⁴⁵ Interview of Daniel Moreno to Zabludowsky in the weekly supplement "Enfoque", *Reforma*, November 16th 1997.

⁴⁶ *Reforma*, March 21th 1998.

as a whole, especially, as will be shown below, since the Electoral Reform of 1996 provided the parties with the largest amount of resources ever to spend on advertising (of which a substantial part was invested on TV). Thus, these young executives were characterised by a higher concern with the running of their businesses than with politics and, therefore, it became increasingly clear to them that a more open political arena would mean larger sums of money for parties to spend on ads. For these entrepreneurs the Electoral Reform of 1996 translated democracy into a highly profitable business.

The Electoral Reform of 1996 established new legal dispositions to grant equity in the access of the parties to the broadcasting media. The Reform of 1996 authorised the IFE through its Commission of Radio Broadcast to carry out a constant monitoring of the way the media presented information on the political campaigns. On December 13th 1996 the IFE made public a series of fairness criteria to be followed by the broadcasting media in relation to the political information. Through these criteria, the IFE expected the National Chamber of the Industries of Radio and Television (CIRT) to induce its members to present information related to the campaigns in a more equilibrated manner. These criteria were the same as those that the IFE established in February 1994 for the elections that year.⁴⁸

As in 1994, the IFE was to monitor the adherence to the criteria and to make public its findings. But these recommendations alone had already proved in 1994 that they were not enough to push the TV companies towards political impartiality. What changed things this time was the crude competition that started to take place between the corporations and, under such circumstances, the immense opportunity for doing business with the vast resources that the IFE was to provide for the campaigns advertised in the media. According to the 1996 Law, there are three modalities for spending on media advertising. Firstly, additionally to the regular fifteen minutes monthly that each party can have in the electronic media (Article 44), the 1996 Reform established that during electoral times the parties could enjoy up to 200 hours on TV and 250 on radio when a general election takes place, and up to 100 hours on TV and 125 on radio when a mid-term election takes place (Article

⁴⁷ *Reforma*, August 17th 1998.

⁴⁸ Again, the criteria were: objectivity; uniform quality in the handling of information; right of the candidates and parties to clarify information; a special section for informing on the campaigns within the news broadcasts; similar air-time for all parties without discrimination; specification of all pre-paid information;

47, paragraph I-a and I-b). With this time, the parties can produce programmes of 5, 7 and 10 minutes. Secondly, Article 47 paragraph I-c, establishes that during electoral periods the IFE will buy and distribute to the parties each month up to ten thousand adverts on radio and four hundred on TV. The duration of each of these ads will be of twenty seconds and will be aimed at advertising only. Both modalities of time –that allocated for programmes and that for advertising ads—are distributed amongst the parties as following: 4 percent goes to parties without representation in Congress (Article 47, paragraph 2), while the others are allocated 30 percent with equal terms for all parties and 70 percent according to their share of votes in the previous electoral process (Article 47, paragraph 3). Of course, the stations were to be paid for all this ad space.

Thirdly, these types of media spaces, bought and distributed to the parties by the IFE, does not exclude the possibility for the parties to buy additional advertising time in the media, as Article 48 states. For instance, for the 1997 elections the Congress authorised the IFE the distribution of US \$ 278 million to the parties, five times more than in 1994. These funds were allocated amongst the parties as follows: 30 percent on equal terms for all parties and 70 percent according to their share of the votes in the previous election. In this way, the PRI obtained US \$111.5 million, the PAN US \$ 66 million, the PRD US \$ 49 million, and the rest went to the other parties. Of this money, the parties utilised large sums to buy ads.⁴⁹

In this way, the Reform of 1996 became a definitive incentive for the TV networks to compete for the parties' advertising, thus contributing indirectly, to the openness of the political arena by trying to maintain balanced, relatively fair, and impartial information in their news broadcasts. The constant monitoring of the IFE provided the parties with the information required on the eventual "dis-information" or partiality of the TV channels –

respect for candidates' private life; and this time they included the obligation for the IFE itself to make public the results of the periodic monitoring. For the 1994 criteria see Chapter Four.

⁴⁹ According to a study conducted by Miguel Acosta, Miguel A. Garcia and Nestor Vargas, the PRD was the party that bought the largest number of TV ads with 271 (21.7 percent), followed by the PRI with 265 (21.2 percent) and by the PAN with 251 (20.1 percent). This same study revealed that the PAN and the PRD preferred to buy spaces in Channel 2 (Televisa), while, in general terms, PRI, PVEM and PT preferred Channel 13 (TV Azteca). It was noticeable that at the highest rating times (AAA Time), Televisa's Channel 2 charged US \$ 60 thousand for a 30 seconds advert, while TV Azteca's Channel 13 (Premium Time) charged US \$ 900 for equivalent time. (see Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos, *Observación de gastos de campaña para Jefe de Gobierno del Distrito Federal*, Mexico City, AMDH, 1997). The AAA Time in Televisa's Channel 2 runs from 17:00 to 24:00 p.m. hours from Monday to Friday (for the rest of Televisa's channels this time starts at 19:00 p.m.); TV Azteca's Premium Time runs from 19:00 to 24:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday.

which was very low, as has been seen—and thus became a mechanism for them to judge a channel as a possible means for allocating its advertising. This was, thus, a clientele that the TV networks could not risk rejecting. Of a publicity market that in 1997 was calculated in US \$ 1.7 billion, the parties contributed 6.5 percent of it, making it obvious the great business that it represented for the TV networks, especially when competition had turned into a sort of zero-sum game for them.⁵⁰

Electoral processes of 1997 and 2000

If the coverage of the 1994 electoral campaigns on TV was still marked by unfairness and an overt promotion of the official party's positions, the 1997 and 2000 campaigns were conversely covered in an unusually open and balanced way. The mid-term electoral process of 1997 took place in a moment characterised by the deep economic shock of 1995 (-6.9 decrease in GDP), whose effects were felt strongly by the population. As in the past, economic instability fuelled the opposition vote, but this time, after more than a decade of recurrent economic crises and with stronger opposition parties, the possibilities for them to inflict a serious defeat to the PRI were higher than at any other time. Special attention was paid to the race for Mexico City's government, for the first time subjected to popular vote, and to the possible composition of the Congress, the key for passing laws. Journalists, specialists and academics spoke about a crucial stage in the Mexican transition process. In any case, the strong competition that marked the electoral process—mainly in Mexico City—created the idea that a major defeat for the PRI was not only possible, but imminent.

In order to avoid any possible fraud, measures were taken to secure the credibility of the process. The IFE decided then to take specific actions for granting the transparency and the fairness of the electoral process. For instance, some members of different opposition parties claimed that the Federal Electoral Registry (RFE), which included the names and identification of all voters, could be misused to favour the PRI. The IFE then spent more than US\$ 3 million in verifying the data contained on the RFE and providing the parties with a copy of all the information about the organisation and the costs of the elections.

⁵⁰ *Adcebra*, no.68, October 1997.

Another problem that opposition parties raised referred to the traditional partiality of television as seen during the 1994 elections.

The IFE announced that its Commission for Broadcasting was to conduct a careful monitoring of the ways in which the media presented information on the campaigns and the candidates. The monitoring of the IFE covered from April 16th to July 3rd 1997. The total time for the campaigns on television –taking into account local TV stations and channels— was 258 hours, 13 minutes and 43 seconds, which were divided among the different parties as shown in Table 7.1. The time on this table refers to the time TV channels devoted to information on the campaigns on their news broadcasts, i.e. unpaid and, hopefully, neutral time, and not to the ad time bought by the parties or by the IFE.

Table 7.1
Coverage Time for Parties on TV News Broadcasts (including local TV channels),
April 13th–July 3rd 1997

	PRI	PRD	PAN	PT	PVEM	PDM	PPS	PFCRN
Time	106h 41'	45h 44'	53h 51''	26h 46'	5h 53'	5h 12'	4h 55'	9h 7'
	32''	35''	15''	53''	47''	15''	54''	32''
Average	41.32%	17.71%	20.86%	10.37%	2.28%	2.02%	1.91%	3.53%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*. April 13th to July 3rd 1997.

As can be seen, when one takes into account the time devoted to each party by television stations in all the 32 states of Mexico, the result clearly benefits the PRI. This outcome may reflect the fact that in many states, local TV channels –particularly the public ones—were still strongly linked to PRI politicians (or controlled by the local executive powers, who appoint the directors of these channels). However, a more careful evaluation of the information provided by the monitoring shows that this may not always be the case, since when taken individually, the information coming from each mainly reflects the strong competition between the PRI and *usually only one* of the largest opposition parties, be it the PAN or the PRD. Except for some very rare cases, as with Mexico City, in the large

majority of states there is no competition amongst more than two parties. Also one must take into account that in 1997 the party with the strongest national presence was the PRI, and opposition parties usually organised their campaigns usually in order to compete against it. For instance, in some Southern states, like Oaxaca and Guerrero the sole opposition to the PRI came from the PRD, since the PAN was very weak there; conversely, in states like Nuevo Leon and Chihuahua—in the North—competition occurred between the PRI and the PAN, leaving the PRD or any other party in third place. In 1997 the stronger presence of the PRI in Mexico's TV channels did not necessarily mean that in all cases the information provided was biased.

When one takes into account the *objectivity* of the information provided by all local and national TV channels considered in the monitoring—defined by the IFE as the non-existence of any additional comment, opinion or qualification by the newscaster on the news presented—the conclusion is the following: of all the news presented 98.46 percent of them were free from comments and qualifications. Moreover, from the total number of qualified (or non-objective) news, 131 notes, the four largest parties received 124, divided into positive and negative qualified news. From the total number of positive notes: the PRI received 20 notes, the PAN 17, the PRD 15 and the PT 4; and from the total number of negative notes: the PRI received 21, the PAN 26, the PRD 13 and the PT 8. The PT received twice the amount of negative comments than positive ones. The only party that received more positive than negative notes was the PRD.

However, the openness of television during this process—in clear contrast to what had happened during the 1994 elections—can be better assessed when evaluating the information provided by the monitoring on the national TV networks, i.e. the ones located in Mexico City, where competition was fierce among the three largest parties. The process in Mexico City comprised not only of the elections for federal deputies and senators, but also of the election of local deputies and, for the first time, also of its governor. The monitoring in Mexico City's (national) TV news broadcasts was carried out between March 16th and July 3rd 1997. In these months television news broadcasts devoted 62 hours, 42 minutes and 14 seconds to the different campaigns, and this time was distributed among the parties as shown by Table 7.2.

Table 7.2

Coverage Time for Parties on National TV News Broadcasts (only TV networks from Mexico City), March 16th –July 3rd 1997

	PRI	PRD	PAN	PT	PVEM	PDM	PPS	PFCRN
Time	15h 6'	15h 34'	15h 00'	3h 32'	4h 47'	3h 11'	2h 15'	3h 14'
	2"	14"	31"	18"	39"	1"	40"	49"
Average	24.08%	24.83%	16.3%	5.64%	7.65%	5.08%	3.61%	5.18%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*, March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

As for the number of notes, 3,904 were presented on national television news broadcasts during the months examined in the monitoring. This number of notes were divided amongst the parties as shown by Table 7.3.

Table 7.3

Number of Notes on the Parties on National TV News Broadcasts (only TV networks from Mexico City), March 16th–July 3rd 1997

	PRI	PRD	PAN	PT	PVEM	PDM	PPS	PFCRN
Notes	855	874	811	266	405	271	157	265
Average	22%	22.41%	20.75%	6.81%	10.37%	6.94%	4.02%	6.79%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*, March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

The outcomes shown in tables 7.2 and 7.3 illustrate the attempts of national television to be substantially more equilibrated and careful with the presentation of information related to the campaigns than it ever had been in past electoral processes. This balance in the information provided was not only reflected on the air-time dedicated to the parties—at least to the three largest—, but also, and most importantly, on the “objectivity” of the notes

presented, as defined by the IFE. Of the 3,904 notes on the campaign presented on national television (TV channels transmitting from Mexico City only), 96.29 percent were not subjected to any qualification, opinion or editorial comment by the newscaster. Of the 145 notes that were not free from comments and other qualifications, 43 (29.66 percent) were considered to be positive for the parties and 102 (70.34 percent) negative. Table 7.4 shows the number and the percentage of objective and non-objective news presented on each party. Table 7.5 shows the number and percentage of non-objective positive and negative comments on the news presented on each party.

Table 7.4
Objective and Non-objective Notes Presented on the Parties on National News Broadcasts

Party	Total number of objective notes	Percentage	Total number of non-objective notes	Percentage	Total number of notes	Percentage
PAN	765	19.60%	46	1.18%	811	20.78%
PRI	829	21.23%	26	0.67%	855	21.90%
PRD	835	21.39%	39	1.00%	874	22.39%
PFCR	259	6.63%	6	0.15%	265	6.78%
PT	258	6.61%	8	0.20%	266	6.81%
PVEM	394	10.09%	11	0.28%	405	10.37%
PPS	152	3.89%	5	0.13%	157	4.02%
PDM	267	6.84%	4	0.10%	271	6.94%
Total	3759	96.29%	145	3.71%	3,904	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*, March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

Table 7.5

Non-objective (Positive and Negative) Notes on the Parties Presented on National News Broadcasts

Party	Total number of positive notes	Percentage	Total number of negative notes	Percentage	Total number of non-objective notes	Percentage
PAN	10	6.90%	36	24.83%	46	31.73%
PRI	10	6.90%	16	11.03%	26	17.93%
PRD	11	7.59%	28	19.31%	39	20.90%
PFCR	4	2.76%	2	1.38%	6	4.14%
PT	1	0.69%	7	4.83%	8	5.52%
PVEM	3	2.07%	8	5.52%	11	7.59%
PPS	2	1.38%	3	2.07%	5	3.45%
PDM	2	1.38%	2	1.38%	4	2.76%
Total	43	29.66%	102	70.34%	145	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*, March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

As can be seen from these tables, the three largest parties received similar treatment with regard to the information presented on national TV news broadcasts. Actually, it was the PRD who received the largest total number of positive and negative remarks on the news broadcasts. It must be remarked, though, that both the PRI and the PAN received far more negative comments than positive ones. Nevertheless, a very interesting feature comes to light when one considers the objectivity of the news on each of the different news broadcasts (Table 7.6). In the monitoring the following national news broadcasts were considered: *24 Horas Evening Edition*; *24 Horas Late Evening Edition*; *Al Despertar*; *Detrás de la Noticia*; *Muchas Noticias* (all of these transmitted on Televisa's channels); *Enlace* (transmitted on the public Channel 11); *En Blanco y Negro*; *Para Usted* (transmitted on Multivision); *Hechos Late Evening Edition*; *Hechos Evening Edition*;

Hechos Weekend Edition; Primera edicion; Hola Mexico!; La Realidad Hoy (all of these transmitted on TV Azteca's channels).

Table 7.6
Objective and Non-objective Notes Presented on the Different News Transmissions

News Broadcast	Total number of objective notes	Percentage	Total number of non-objective notes	Percentage	Total number of notes	Percentage
24 Horas L.E.	226	5.79%	0	0%	226	5.79%
24 Horas E.	143	3.66%	0	0%	143	3.66%
Al Despertar	468	11.99%	0	0%	468	11.99%
Detras de la Noticia	195	4.99%	0	0%	195	4.99%
Muchas Noticias	199	5.10%	2	0.05%	201	5.15%
Enlace	394	10.09%	0	0%	394	10.09%
En Blanco y Negro	128	3.28%	11	0.28%	139	3.56%
Para Usted	376	9.63%	38	0.97%	414	10.60%
Hechos L.E.	294	7.53%	9	0.23%	303	7.76%
Hechos E.	128	3.28%	26	0.67%	154	3.94%
Hechos W.	116	2.97%	1	0.03%	117	3.00%
Hola Mexico!	564	14.45%	47	1.20%	611	15.65%
La realidad hoy	1	0.03%	0	0%	1	0.03%
Preparen, apunten, voten	57	1.46%	0	0%	57	1.46%
Primera edicion	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Punto por punto	470	12.04%	11	0.28%	481	12.32%
Total	3,759	96.29%	145	3.71%	3,904	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación con los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*, March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

It becomes immediately evident that Televisa's news broadcasts, and those of the public Channel 11, were the most balanced and avoided editorialising the information presented. The handling of information by Televisa on the 1997 campaigns markedly contrasted with its own performance on previous campaigns, when a strong bias in favour of the PRI was evident. In the case of the other two networks, Multivision tended to comment on less than ten percent of the news presented, and TV Azteca's news broadcasts proved to be the ones that included more additional comments and opinions. Though the monitoring of the IFE in 1997 does not inform on this aspect, it is possible to sustain that while Televisa and Channel 11 tried to maintain a balanced presentation of news, Multivision, when commenting on the news, did slightly criticise the PRI and the PAN, and TV Azteca tried at the same time to favour the PRI and undermine the image of the PRD. For instance, the late evening edition of the news broadcast *Hechos* (Channel 13 of TV Azteca), everyday during the campaigns devoted a special section on the parties that presented cartoons with the title of "The Capital's Handicap" that represented the electoral competition for the government of Mexico City as if it was a race between three horses, the PAN's, the PRD's and the PRI's. The horse that represented the PRI candidate, Alfredo Del Mazo, was presented as being strong, young and fast, while the one representing Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (again the PRD candidate) was pictured as old, stubborn and tired. Another way in which TV Azteca mocked and presented negative propaganda against Cárdenas was carried out with the transmission of brief political parodies using puppets, known as *Los Peluches*, in which, again, that candidate was represented as being basically incompetent and obsessed with power.

These attitudes were also registered by a news content study carried out by the Mexican Academy of Human Rights (AMDH) between March 17th and July 2nd 1997.⁵¹ This study analyzed the content of 3,608 news transmissions of which only 182 (5 percent) of them contained any comment or remark (Table 7.7). The news broadcasts studied were Televisa's *24 Horas* (evening edition), TV Azteca's *Hechos* (evening edition), Multivision's *Para Usted*, and Canal 11's *Enlace*. In general terms, the news broadcasts

⁵¹ Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos, *Las elecciones federales de 1997 en cuatro noticiarios de televisión*, Mexico City, AMDH, 1997.

were extremely careful in remaining unbiased. Impartiality was more evident in *Enlace*, *24 Horas* and *Para Usted*. *Hechos* proved itself to be the news transmission that broadcast the most comments, most of them unfavourable towards the PRD and its candidate. In this regard, while *Hechos* resulted in being decidedly anti-PRD, *Para Usted's* negative observations were directed mainly against PAN's candidate Carlos Castillo and PRI's candidate Alfredo Del Mazo. *24 Horas* and *Enlace* tried to maintain neutrality and impartiality in their notes.⁵²

Table 7.7

Positive and Negative Comments on the Candidates for Mexico City Government on the Main National News Broadcasts, March 17th-July 2nd 1997

Candidate/ News Broadcast	24 Horas	Hechos	Para Usted	Enlace	Total
Alfredo Del Mazo (PRI)	1/0	10/4	0/7	0/0	11/11
Carlos Castillo (PAN)	0/2	2/9	0/9	0/0	2/20
Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (PRD)	0/1	2/12	3/3	2/0	7/16
Guadalupe González (PT)	0/0	0/0	0/1	0/1	0/2
Jorge González (PVEM)	0/0	0/1	3/1	0/0	3/2
Pedro Ferriz (PFCRN)	0/0	0/0	2/0	0/0	2/0
Fernández Flores (PPS)	0/0	0/0	1/0	0/0	1/0
Valadez Montoya (PDM)	0/0	0/0	1/0	0/0	1/0
Total	1/3	14/26	10/21	2/1	27/51

NB: The number that appears on the left of the dash indicates the positive remarks and the number on the right indicates the negative remarks.

Source: Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos, *Las elecciones federales de 1997 en cuatro noticiarios de televisión*, Mexico City, AMDH, 1997.

⁵² Paradoxically, the most impartial, objective, neutral and most complete information on the campaigns was delivered by *Enlace*, the news broadcasts of Channel 11, a public channel.

In spite of the relatively adverse attitude towards the opposition parties –especially the PRD—that TV Azteca displayed during the campaign of 1997, both the monitoring of the IFE and the study of the AMDH agree that there was a positive advance in the television coverage of the campaigns, which was characterised by an equilibrium in the information presented on the three most important parties.⁵³ In the case of the election for Mexico City's Government, Cárdenas was the candidate who received more time, more notes and more complete coverage, though he was also the most openly criticised in one news broadcast –*Hechos*.⁵⁴ Also remarkable was the behaviour of Jacobo Zabludowsky, the anchorman of *24 Horas*, who tried to maintain impartiality and neutrality in his comments, and even declared in his transmission of April 21st 1997 that he expected that Televisa would rank at the top in the criteria of objectivity in the next partial results on the monitoring to be published by the IFE in the following days.

Another positive change should to be highlighted: for the first time, information concerning the electoral campaigns was presented in special sections within the news broadcasts. Both the monitoring of the AMDH and the IFE showed highly equilibrated news releases and a quite balanced presentation of information on the three largest parties and their candidates in these news broadcasts. But perhaps one of the most important advances was the recognition of all the candidates and the parties for the general impartiality and openness of television. The day of the election, July 6th 1997 at 8:00 p.m., TV channels were reporting on the victory of the PRD in Mexico City. With it, the strong mistrust against a TV system that had favoured the PRI for decades was sensibly reduced. In this sense, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, the candidate who was most critical of the traditionally biased political role of television, affirmed that “one important difference with the past that has had an influence on the actual [electoral] final outcome were the media”.⁵⁵ This general openness of television during the 1997 campaign was acknowledged also by the delegation sent by the Carter Center, in whose report it established that,

⁵³ AMDH (1997), pgs. 18-19 and IFE (1997), pgs. 30-31.

⁵⁴ A long list of examples of the various forms in which *Hechos* tried to undermine the candidacy of Cárdenas can be revised in Miguel Acosta Valverde, “Las elecciones federales de 1997 según TV Azteca y Televisa”, in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, no.49, June-July, Mexico City, Fundación Manuel Buendía, 1997.

The problem of electronic media bias in Mexico has ameliorated considerably. In 1997, both Televisa and TV Azteca provided somewhat balanced coverage of all political parties and candidates. A televised debate between Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas and Alfredo Del Mazo for the governor's race in Mexico City signaled the electronic media's growing openness. Escalating competition and more discerning viewers have encouraged the electronic media to become more objective in their coverage.⁵⁵

The presence of different parties on TV convinced many people that competition for power was true and helped to generate the necessary confidence in the electoral process and its organisation. This does not mean that television suddenly became a producer of critical and analytical programmes on politics, but compared with the recent past, the openness showed during the electoral process had not been seen before. Some negative aspects did remain however. If it was true that during the campaigns the information was presented in a highly impartial way, after the electoral process these attitudes did not remain the same in all television broadcasts. For instance, TV Azteca then started a campaign against the PRD and its government in Mexico City. An example of this could be clearly seen in June 7th 1999 when a famous TV presenter, Francisco Stanley, was murdered outside a restaurant in Mexico City. That same evening, TV Azteca, the network for which the presenter worked, decided to cancel its normal programming and devoted an all-day transmission to denouncing "the irresponsibility" of the government of Mexico City for their poor investigation of the case of for the general lack of crime prevention policies. Also on that day Ricardo Salinas Pliego, TV Azteca's CEO, on a nation-wide transmission insisted on the removal of all of Mexico City's top ranking government officials, including the Secretary of Justice (*Procurador*) and the governor himself. This attitude remained and the confrontations between TV Azteca and the Cárdenas administration became evident for all to see.

In this way, though the general attitude of television after the electoral process of 1997 started to be more open, this did not mean that all parties were treated in the same fashion. While Televisa and the public Channel 11 remained relatively impartial, TV Azteca became openly critical of some opposition alternatives such as the PRD. These ambiguities

⁵⁵ Cited in Alma Rosa Alva de la Selva, "La pista de los comicios federales en la TV", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicacion*, no.50, August-September, Mexico City, Fundación Manuel Buendía, 1997, p.5.

⁵⁶ The Carter Center Delegation to Observe the July 6th, 1997 Elections in Mexico, *Report*, Latin American and Caribbean Program, The Carter Center, Atlanta, 1997, p.18.

of television were maintained still until the beginning of the 2000 electoral process, where certain voices who warned about the possible recession of TV openness in a situation in which what was to be decided there was the control of the federal political positions –both at the Executive and the Legislative levels. Thus the 2000 elections were not only a test for the Mexican political system, but also for the TV openness.

The electoral process of 2000 brought with it the possibility for voting the PRI out from the presidency for the first time in seventy-one years. Competition amongst the three largest parties was also the strongest ever. Since 1998 some intellectuals and opposition politicians had been making intense efforts for the creation of a common front against the PRI by presenting a single presidential candidate in order to have greater chances of victory. During 1999 this approach was also contemplated by the most important pre-election candidates of the PAN and PRD, Vicente Fox and Cuauhtemoc Cárdenas respectively. Several meetings among party officials and intellectuals took place between August and September 1999 to elaborate a common platform and an acceptable procedure for selecting the single candidacy. The problem was that both the PAN and the PRD wanted their candidates to run for the coalition. In spite of the efforts to reach a substantial agreement thereupon, the project was definitively abandoned in October of that year when the PAN most conservative members and PRD politicians decided to run their presidential candidates separately. However, the idea of the coalition was not abandoned, and both the PAN and the PRD decided then to lead their own coalition separately. Two opposition coalitions were thus registered before the IFE, the *Alianza por el Cambio* (lead by the PAN) and the *Alianza por Mexico* (lead by the PRD).

The rise and fall of the single opposition front project coincided with a primary process within the PRI for selecting its own presidential candidate. In the PRI primaries President Zedillo's former Secretary of *Gobernacion* turned out to be the pre-candidate winner, the process in general was a successful one. And this contrasted markedly with the failure of opposition parties to create a meaningful agreement on an electoral common front. The final selection of the PRI candidate was to be carried out, picking one of the four pre-candidates on Sunday, November 7th 1999, through an open vote in which all those citizens with voting card could participate. The PRI success made things complicated for the opposition, since the official candidate, Francisco Labastida, was undoubtedly shrouded

with a certain aura of legitimacy (though the rules of the competition were constantly called into question by the other three pre-candidates).⁵⁷

What is important to note here is how the television news broadcasts reported on these pre-electoral campaigns. Between August 17th and November 7th 1999, that is between the moments in which the creation of an opposition alliance seemed feasible, and the election day of the PRI presidential candidate, the journal *Reforma* decided to monitor the time given by Televisa (Channel 2) and TV Azteca (Channel 13) –and eight nation-wide radio stations—to each of the most important pre-candidates of all the parties.⁵⁸ *Reforma's* monitoring focused on two things: the quantity of time devoted to each candidate on the news broadcasts and also on the quantity of ad-time bought by each of them in which to insert their adverts in this media. In the case of television, the amount of time devoted to each candidate on the news broadcasts without considering any paid advertising spot is shown on Table 7.8.

There are some important things to notice. Firstly, it was actually Vicente Fox, PAN's main candidate, who received more attention (in time devoted) from television in general, though it was actually Televisa who gave him more time for coverage. TV Azteca slightly favoured Labastida, though in general terms it is possible to say that both networks presented quite a balanced coverage in the time devoted to each (with the exception of Televisa's coverage for Bartlett).

In the case of the internal PRI competition, Francisco Labastida was strongly criticised, even by his fellow PRI competitors, for being "President Zedillo's candidate" and, thus, receiving all sorts of explicit and implicit support from the PRI machinery, but also from the media. Roberto Madrazo, who openly defied President Zedillo, claimed several times that "the whole apparatus" was against him and that the media were purposely giving more spaces to Labastida. However, as can be seen, in general terms it was Fox who received the largest coverage time of all the pre-candidates.

⁵⁷ See Chapter Seven.

⁵⁸ Running for the PRI there were: Francisco Labastida, Roberto Madrazo, Humberto R. Villanueva and Manuel Bratlett. In the PRD, though Cuahutemoc Cardenas was by far the most likely candidate, Porfirio Munoz-Ledo declared his intentions for running for the candidacy. In the PAN, Vicente Fox –then governor of Guabajuato—was already the strongest candidate.

Table 7.8

Time in Seconds for the Pre-Candidates on Different TV News Broadcasts, August 17th-November 3rd 1999

Pre-candidates	Time on TV News Broadcasts by Channel			
	Channel 2 (Televisa)	Channel 13 (TV Azteca)	Total TV Time	Percentage
Bartlett (PRI)	3,161	6,110	9,271	8.68%
Labastida (PRI)	10,908	11,002	21,910	20.51%
Madrazo (PRI)	7,180	8,934	16,114	15.08%
Villanueva (PRI)	6,032	5,824	11,856	11.10%
Cardenas (PRD)	8,014	7,885	15,899	14.88%
M. Ledo (PRD)	4,239	4,128	8,367	7.83%
Fox (PAN)	12,763	10,628	23,391	21.90%
Total	52,297	54,511	106,808	100%

Source: Elaborated with information published by *Reforma* between Tuesday, August 17th and Monday, November 9th 1999.

Nevertheless, when compared with the PRI candidates' time, Labastida appears as the most favoured one. Table 7.9 shows the contrast between the quantity of time each of the four PRI pre-candidates received on Channel 2's and Channel 13's news broadcasts and the quantity of time each of them explicitly bought on those same channels.

Table 7.9

**Ad-Time *versus* Regular News Broadcast Coverage of the PRI Pre-candidates on TV,
August 17th-November 3rd 1999**

Pre-candidate	Time on News Broadcast	Advertising Time
F. Labastida	6 hours 08 minutes	1 hour 16 minutes
M. Bartlett	2 hours 57 minutes	2 hours 16 minutes
R. Madrazo	4 hours 46 minutes	3 hours 26 minutes
H.R. Villanueva	3 hours 29 minutes	17 minutes

Source: *Reforma*, November 6th 1999.

Though Madrazo was the pre-candidate who bought more ad-time on the screens, Labastida was the one who received more time on the news broadcasts. To this apparent preference of television for Labastida other incidents occurred that put television openness at stake and generated suspicions on the impartiality of this medium and the renewal of its support for the PRI. An important incident occurred when transmitting the Government's Annual Report (*Informe de Gobierno*) presented by President Zedillo in September 1st 1999. Every year, the official reply to that report is given by the Chairman of the Legislative Commission of Governance and Constitution. In 1999, the chairman was a member of the PAN, Carlos Medina, who replied with some severe criticisms to the president's arguments. Though both the president's Report and Medina's reply were broadcast live, later in the evening on the TV news broadcasts, the reply was either under-reported or strongly criticised. In the case of *El Noticiario* (Channel 2), its newscaster Guillermo Ortega presented a brief account of the issues and topics presented by the president during his speech and then, without transmitting any part of the reply of Mr. Medina, he directly qualified it as "shameful for the Mexican people", and as a "lack of respect" for the president. In turn, the newscaster of Channel 13 *Hechos*, Javier Alatorre, after commenting on the president's speech, and without presenting a single line of Mr. Medina's reply, introduced an editorial comment in which the director of news broadcasts of the network, Sergio Sarmiento, described the reply as "an incendiary discourse" charged with

“intolerance”.⁵⁹ This and other incidents generated the suspicions about the impartiality of television and meant that by the beginning of November PAN’s pre-candidate Vicente Fox warned against what he called the usual challenges for opposition parties in electoral times: on the one hand, the whole support of the state machinery in favour of the official party candidate, and on the other, the unbalanced treatment and coverage of the mass media in favour of the PRI.⁶⁰

The parties and alliances in competition for the 2000 general election were: *Alianza por el Cambio* (PAN and Partido Verde), *Alianza por Mexico* (PRD, PT and three other newly created parties),⁶¹ PRI, Partido del Centro Democrático, PARM, and Partido Democracia Social. Under such competitive process and in order to present an image of impartiality, Joaquin Vargas, President of the CIRT, declared (one day after Fox’s warning) in a meeting with top officials of the IFE that all members of the Chamber were to assume the responsibility of presenting information on the elections of 2000 in balanced and impartial ways.⁶² The parties unanimously agreed that the media –especially radio and TV—should concentrate on the presentation of information on issues, proposals and debates, not on incidents and personal anecdotes of the candidates.

Thus, by the end of 1999, the situation regarding the presentation of information on TV screens was still ambiguous. On the one hand, the experience of 1997 showed that openness was under way, but on the other, the last six months of 1999 were showing that old trends were difficult to overcome. Episodes that illustrated such ambiguous paths of TV openness continued into early in 2000. Some of them were simply incidental,⁶³ and others were more significant.⁶⁴ But it is difficult to imagine that the process could have been otherwise. After

⁵⁹ *Reforma*, September 2nd 1999.

⁶⁰ *La Jornada*, November 3rd 1999.

⁶¹ Partido Sociedad Nacionalista, Partido Convergencia Democrática, Partido

⁶² *El Universal*, November 4th 1999.

⁶³ For instance, the suspension for one week of Guillermo Ortega, the newscaster of *El Noticiero* (Channel 2), after PRI top officials complained –in private—for the presentation in February during an evening edition of a mock election result in a school in which the PAN’s candidate, Fox, obtained the victory.

⁶⁴ For instance, the protests of the IFE from the end of February to the beginning of May 2000 against the cancellation of its spots (inviting the citizens to vote and to refuse bribery) on eight radio stations in Campeche, 5 in Guanajuato and a radio group in Baja California. The suspension was supposedly caused by a letter sent by the CIRT (Letter 3236, of February 23rd) to its members instructing them to stop transmitting the adverts of the IFE. Though it was never clear if that letter really existed, the IFE complained before RTC, the responsible authority within the *Secretariat* of Gobernación, and for months the attitude of this agency was to

all, the decisions to transmit alternative information on politics were the consequences of transformations within the television networks and their markets, more than the outcome of constant pressures from the parties or the “democratic convictions” on the part of the TV executives or licensees. Thus, at times it was not clear that after decades in which the identification of interests between television and the PRI regime was taken for granted, a definitive opening for political alternatives was to take place on the screens. The past was still a heavy legacy, but the trend towards openness was undoubtedly on its way.

Once the electoral campaigns officially started in January 2000, and in spite of eventual claims from some opposition parties on minor irregularities, television was able in general to present the political information of the whole electoral process in quite impartial way. The monitoring of the IFE, carried out between January 19th and June 29th 2000, reveals this clearly when evaluating the information provided by the national TV channels –though of course, some local TV channels still remained partial and tendentious. This was no surprise since in some states the influence of the governors and other political groups linked to the PRI over local stations is strong –there is some evidence that this happened with cases such as Tabasco. This unbalanced presentation of information on local TV channels can be clearly seen on table 7.10 below, which shows the total average of news presented on each party (or party alliance) on all of the local television channels. One should not forget that by 2000 the PRI still ruled in 21 states. But strong control over stations by PRI politicians is only part of the explanation; the rest lies in the fact that in all states this party was the “enemy to defeat” by opposition parties. As was said before, in most states, the electoral race was to take place essentially between the PRI candidate and one of the other two largest opposition coalitions’ candidates.

refuse to take any serious step for obliging these media to re-transmit the spots. Finally, in May due to the constant pressure of the IFE, the stations decided to re-transmit the spots.

Table 7.10
Average Number of Notes on the Parties on TV News Broadcasts in Different States,
Jan.19th-June 26th 2000

STATE	AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	DS	Total
Aguascalientes	30.5%	26.1%	20.1%	6.8%	8.9%	7.6%	100.0%
Baja California	29.1%	39.0%	20.2%	2.7%	4.0%	4.9%	100.0%
Baja California Sur	23.9%	33.3%	33.1%	5.6%	3.1%	1.0%	100.0%
Campeche	17.0%	41.3%	16.2%	5.6%	12.4%	7.5%	100.0%
Coahuila	26.8%	50.5%	13.8%	2.2%	4.4%	2.3%	100.0%
Colima	23.6%	44.4%	18.8%	8.6%	.3%	4.2%	100.0%
Chiapas	24.9%	31.4%	23.9%	5.2%	5.2%	9.4%	100.0%
Chihuahua	31.5%	43.5%	16.6%	3.3%	1.9%	3.2%	100.0%
Distrito Federal (Mexico City)	28.7%	26.1%	23.6%	6.5%	9.2%	5.7%	100.0%
Durango	20.1%	54.3%	22.3%	.3%	1.2%	1.8%	100.0%
Guanajuato	41.7%	22.1%	17.6%	3.8%	9.5%	5.2%	100.0%
Guerrero	25.4%	44.0%	26.8%	2.1%	.4%	1.4%	100.0%
Hidalgo	21.1%	37.6%	22.5%	8.7%	4.8%	5.3%	100.0%
Jalisco	30.1%	36.1%	15.2%	7.0%	6.9%	4.7%	100.0%
México	21.3%	25.6%	20.2%	9.9%	14.0%	9.0%	100.0%
Michoacán	15.5%	40.3%	24.1%	4.6%	9.9%	5.6%	100.0%
Morelos	17.1%	42.0%	27.6%	4.0%	5.5%	3.8%	100.0%
Nayarit	22.4%	32.9%	29.8%	7.0%	5.7%	2.2%	100.0%
Nuevo León	29.7%	35.0%	19.0%	6.1%	7.0%	3.1%	100.0%
Oaxaca	26.7%	36.8%	21.4%	3.5%	7.3%	4.3%	100.0%
Puebla	28.7%	35.0%	22.3%	3.8%	5.1%	5.1%	100.0%
Querétaro	29.7%	33.7%	16.2%	7.9%	7.4%	5.2%	100.0%
Quintana Roo	28.4%	36.1%	20.0%	5.1%	6.3%	4.2%	100.0%
San Luis Potosí	31.1%	40.0%	15.5%	4.2%	5.4%	3.8%	100.0%
Sinaloa	22.5%	42.8%	25.5%	2.2%	3.7%	3.3%	100.0%
Sonora	34.4%	31.6%	19.6%	4.3%	6.3%	3.8%	100.0%
Tabasco	14.2%	59.9%	10.9%	4.5%	6.4%	4.0%	100.0%
Tamaulipas	27.9%	36.7%	23.9%	2.0%	4.4%	5.2%	100.0%
Tlaxcala	19.3%	14.8%	26.4%	16.9%	11.3%	11.3%	100.0%
Veracruz	26.0%	34.9%	25.4%	4.3%	5.4%	4.0%	100.0%
Yucatán	18.1%	40.3%	16.4%	7.0%	9.6%	8.6%	100.0%
Zacatecas	19.8%	38.9%	28.8%	4.5%	4.2%	3.8%	100.0%
Total	27.1%	34.0%	21.2%	5.6%	7.2%	4.9%	100.0%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana, January 19th-June 29th 2000*, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

One may note that the average of news in general favours the PRI, though in most states the figures for the two opposition alliances are not very far from those of the PRI. However, the

presence of opposition parties on the screens is clearly larger in urban and Northern states than in more rural and Southern states. There were states under strong PRI bosses, like Tabasco, Campeche or Yucatan, where the number of news on this party more than doubled that of its closest rival.

When summing up the total average of the news of all states it is again the PRI who received more notes on the screens, 34 percent against 27.1 percent of the alliance supportive of Fox, and 21.2 percent of that which supported Cardenas. This dominance of the PRI in the number of notes presented is also reflected in the time devoted to this party by TV stations all over the country (Table 7.11).

Table 7.11

Total Time for Parties on the TV News Broadcasts in all the Country, Jan.19th-June 26th 2000

	AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	DS	Total
Total	145:04:12	219:36:34	111:25:25	29:32:02	30:22:50	23:14:18	559:15:23
Average	25.9%	39.3%	19.9%	5.3%	5.4%	4.2%	100.0%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana, January 19th-June 29th 2000*, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom

Nevertheless, an interesting may be noted contrast when evaluating the information given by local TV stations against the information presented by national TV networks, which are the ones with the largest audiences. When considering the results of the monitoring of the national TV channels, Televisa's and TV Azteca's, a more balanced transmission of the campaign becomes evident. Tables 7.12 to 7.15 show the time, the average of time, the number of notes and the average of notes devoted to each party and coalition on these national TV news broadcasts transmitting from Mexico City. In the tables, the second column indicates the TV channel number.

Table 7.12

Time for Parties on National TV News Broadcasts (Mexico City), Jan.19th-June 26th 2000

News Broadcasts		AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	DS	Total	
TV Channels	2	Noticiero (14:30 –15:00)	0:58:42	0:48:10	0:38:02	0:10:57	0:21:48	0:18:13	3:15:54
		Noticiero (22:30- 23:30)	4:08:57	3:44:45	3:22:58	0:57:32	1:14:12	1:12:41	14:41:08
		Primero Noticias (6:00-09:00)	6:24:25	5:37:57	5:03:06	1:16:37	2:12:51	1:47:19	22:22:19
	7	Hechos del 7 (21:00- 21:30)	0:39:48	0:12:51	0:13:25	0:01:19	0:18:32	0:00:40	1:26:39
	9	Noticiero (20:30 –21:00)	0:42:19	0:42:24	0:28:31	0:12:50	0:22:35	0:12:35	2:41:15
	11	Enlace (21:30- 22:00)	0:31:22	0:32:31	0:31:26	0:02:32	0:08:37	0:02:30	1:49:00
		Noticias con Sergio Uzeta (21:30- 22:00)	1:42:02	1:55:09	1:28:47	0:08:44	0:31:16	0:09:49	5:55:50
	13	Hechos (6:00- 9:00)	8:04:21	7:54:06	6:04:09	2:57:21	2:40:12	1:50:12	29:30:23
		Hechos (15:00- 16:00)	0:43:13	0:38:15	0:31:19	0:17:22	0:17:44	0:09:08	2:37:03
		Hechos (22:30- 23:30)*	5:01:37	4:40:01	3:27:10	0:30:17	0:55:34	0:36:07	15:10:49
40	CNI Noticias (22:00-23:00)	7:24:20	6:02:19	4:50:21	0:39:55	1:00:00	0:19:20	20:16:17	
Total		36:21:12	32:48:33	26:39:21	7:15:30	10:03:26	6:38:39	119:46:42	

Except for *Hechos*, which transmits from Monday to Sunday, all the rest of the news broadcasts are transmitted from Monday to Friday at the scheduled time in parenthesis.

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana*, January 19th-June 29th 2000, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

Table 7.13

Average Time for Parties on National TV News Broadcasts (Mexico City), Jan.19th-June 26th 2000

News Broadcasts	AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	DS	Total
Noticiero (14:30-15:00)	2.7%	2.4%	2.4%	2.5%	3.6%	4.6%	2.7%
Noticiero (22:30-23:30)	11.4%	11.4%	12.7%	13.2%	12.3%	18.2%	12.3%
Primero Noticias (6:00-09:00)	17.6%	17.2%	19.0%	17.6%	22.0%	26.9%	18.7%
Hechos del 7 (21:00-21:30)	1.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.3%	3.1%	0.2%	1.2%
Noticiero (20:30-21:00)	1.9%	2.2%	1.8%	2.9%	3.7%	3.2%	2.2%
Enlace (21:30-22:00)	1.4%	1.7%	2.0%	0.6%	1.4%	0.6%	1.5%
Noticias con Sergio Uzeta (21:30-22:00)	4.7%	5.9%	5.6%	2.0%	5.2%	2.5%	5.0%
Hechos (6:00-9:00)	22.2%	24.1%	22.8%	40.7%	26.5%	27.6%	24.6%
Hechos (15:00-16:00)	2.0%	1.9%	2.0%	4.0%	2.9%	2.3%	2.2%
Hechos (22:30-23:30)*	13.8%	14.2%	13.0%	7.0%	9.2%	9.1%	12.7%
CNI Noticias (22:00-23:00)	20.4%	18.4%	18.2%	9.3%	9.9%	4.9%	16.9%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Except for *Hechos*, which transmits from Monday to Sunday, all the rest of the news broadcasts are transmitted from Monday to Friday at the scheduled time in parenthesis.

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana*, January 19th-June 29th 2000, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

Table 7.14

Number of Notes on Parties on National TV News Broadcasts (Mexico City), Jan.19th-
June 26th 2000

News Broadcasts			AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	DS	Total
TV Channels	2	Noticiero (14:30-15:00)	98	78	66	30	46	30	348
		Noticiero (22:30-23:30)	370	306	319	110	145	125	1375
		Primero Noticias (6:00-09:00)	533	516	474	134	183	126	1966
	7	Hechos del 7 (21:00-21:30)	52	37	41	8	27	6	171
	9	Noticiero (20:30-21:00)	102	95	68	29	45	26	365
	11	Enlace (21:30-22:00)	43	42	42	4	13	4	148
		Noticias con Sergio Uzeta (21:30-22:00)	107	105	90	18	36	20	376
	13	Hechos (6:00-9:00)	599	543	499	130	195	88	2054
		Hechos (15:00-16:00)	125	121	103	72	66	60	547
		Hechos (22:30-23:30)*	396	364	301	53	102	52	1268
	40	CNI Noticias (22:00-23:00)	441	401	354	61	64	36	1357
Total			2866	2608	2357	649	922	573	9975

Except for *Hechos*, which transmits from Monday to Sunday, all the rest of the news broadcasts are transmitted from Monday to Friday at the scheduled time in parenthesis.

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana*, January 19th-June 29th 2000, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

Table 7.15

Average of Notes on Parties on National TV News Broadcasts (Mexico City), Jan.19th-
June 26th 2000

News Broadcasts			AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	DS	Total
TV Channels	2	Noticiero (14:30-15:00)	3.4%	3.0%	2.8%	4.6%	5.0%	5.2%	3.5%
		Noticiero (22:30-23:30)	12.9%	11.7%	13.5%	16.9%	15.7%	21.8%	13.8%
		Primero Noticias (6:00-09:00)	18.6%	19.8%	20.1%	20.6%	19.8%	22.0%	19.7%
	7	Hechos del 7 (21:00-21:30)	1.8%	1.4%	1.7%	1.2%	2.9%	1.0%	1.7%
	9	Noticiero (20:30-21:00)	3.6%	3.6%	2.9%	4.5%	4.9%	4.5%	3.7%
	11	Enlace (21:30-22:00)	1.5%	1.6%	1.8%	.6%	1.4%	.7%	1.5%
		Noticias con Sergio Uzeta (21:30-22:00)	3.7%	4.0%	3.8%	2.8%	3.9%	3.5%	3.8%
	13	Hechos (6:00-9:00)	20.9%	20.8%	21.2%	20.0%	21.1%	15.4%	20.6%
		Hechos (15:00-16:00)	4.4%	4.6%	4.4%	11.1%	7.2%	10.5%	5.5%
		Hechos (22:30-23:30)*	13.8%	14.0%	12.8%	8.2%	11.1%	9.1%	12.7%
	40	CNI Noticias (22:00-23:00)	15.4%	15.4%	15.0%	9.4%	6.9%	6.3%	13.6%
Total (Percentage)			100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Except for *Hechos*, which transmits from Monday to Sunday, all the rest of the news broadcasts are transmitted from Monday to Friday at the scheduled time in parenthesis.

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana*, January 19th-June 29th 2000, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

As can be seen in both by the time devoted to each party and the number of notes presented on each of them by all the national news broadcasts, competition between the three largest parties was indeed reflected with great accuracy. In the case of broadcasting time for parties, on seven news broadcasts it was the coalition supportive of candidate Vicente Fox, who obtained the longest coverage. The total time devoted for each of the three largest parties was 36 hours 21 minutes and 12 seconds for AC, followed by 32 hours 48 minutes and 33 seconds for PRI and 26 hours 39 minutes and 21 seconds for AM. The main competition thus was between AC and PRI and this was also reflected by the total number of notes presented on the parties: 2,866 for AC against 2,608 for the PRI (and 2,357 for AM). Now, if the amount of time and notes were similar, what was the content of the news provided on the parties by the news broadcasts?

As for the way in which information was presented in the notes, the IFE this time decided to replace the word "objectivity" by the less controversial one of "neutrality", always referring to the absence of comments or editorial remarks in the notes on the parties and/or candidates, be they positive or negative. Table 7.16, below, shows the total number of notes on each party or coalition divided by positive, negative and neutral notes all presented by TV news broadcasts, both local and national. Table 7.17 does the same, but it focuses only on the national TV news broadcasts.

Table 7.16

Positive, Negative and Neutral Notes on the Parties Presented on Local and National TV News Broadcasts, Jan.19th-June 26th 2000

		AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	DS	Total
TOTAL NATIONAL	Negative	404	310	161	55	57	16	1003
	Neutral	8259	10591	6669	1775	2261	1532	31087
	Positive	202	233	121	8	39	54	657
	Total	8865	11134	6951	1838	2357	1602	32747

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana, January 19th-June 29th 2000*, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

Table 7.17

Positive, Negative and Neutral Notes on the Parties Presented on National TV News Broadcasts, Jan.19th-June 26th 2000

News Broadcast				AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARMI	DS	Total
TV Channels	2	Noticiero (14:30-15:00)	Negative	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
			Neutral	97	78	65	30	45	30	345
			Total	98	78	66	30	46	30	348
		Noticiero (22:30- 23:30)	Negative	19	11	7	2	3	2	44
			Neutral	344	292	306	108	142	120	1312
			Positive	7	3	6	0	0	3	19
			Total	370	306	319	110	145	125	1375
		Primero Noticias (6:00-09:00)	Negative	4	3	4	3	3	1	18
			Neutral	527	513	469	131	180	125	1945
			Positive	2	0	1	0	0	0	3
			Total	533	516	474	134	183	126	1966
	7	Hechos del 7 (21:00-21:30)	Negative	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
			Neutral	49	36	41	8	27	6	167
			Positive	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
			Total	52	37	41	8	27	6	171
	9	Noticiero (20:30-21:00)	Negative	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
			Neutral	99	94	67	29	45	26	360
			Positive	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
			Total	102	95	68	29	45	26	365
	11	Enlace (21:30-22:00)	Neutral	43	42	42	4	13	4	148
			Total	43	42	42	4	13	4	148
		Noticias con Sergio Uzeta (21:30-22:00)	Negative	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
			Neutral	106	105	90	18	36	20	375
			Total	107	105	90	18	36	20	376
	13	Hechos de la Mañana (6:00-9:00)	Negative	7	7	4	3	0	1	22
			Neutral	585	535	495	127	195	86	2023
			Positive	7	1	0	0	0	1	9
			Total	599	543	499	130	195	88	2054
		Hechos (15:00-16:00)	Negative	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
			Neutral	124	120	103	72	66	60	545
			Total	125	121	103	72	66	60	547
		Hechos (22:30-23:30)*	Negative	13	4	6	0	0	0	23
			Neutral	382	359	295	53	102	52	1243
			Positive	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
			Total	396	364	301	53	102	52	1268
	40	CNI Noticias (22:00-23:00)	Negative	16	20	13	5	0	0	54
			Neutral	411	379	329	56	64	36	1275
			Positive	14	2	12	0	0	0	28
			Total	441	401	354	61	64	36	1357

Except for *Hechos*, which transmits from Monday to Sunday, all the rest of the news broadcasts are transmitted from Monday to Friday at the scheduled time in parenthesis.

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana, January 19th-June 29th 2000*, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

For all the parties the notes delivered were mostly neutral, and that further information was seldom presented. As for the three largest parties, one can even see that the PRI obtained the worse ratio between positive and negative news, getting 6.8 more negative comments than positive ones. For the other two largest coalitions, the figures are quite similar since each obtained more negative notes than positive ones at a ratio of 1.89-1.90.

As for the kind of notes presented by the news broadcasts, it is again the impartiality that becomes evident. In the case of Televisa's news broadcasts, they all presented a total of 4,054 notes on the campaign of which only 68 notes were negative and 25 positive on the parties. Out of these latter figures, the PRI received 15 negative comments and only 3 positive remarks, while AC obtained 25 negative for 11 positive notes, and AM got 13 negative and 7 positive statements. In the case of TV Azteca's news broadcasts in all they presented a total of 4,040 notes on the campaign of which 50 of them were negative and 12 positive. Of those notes that were accounted for the PRI obtained 13 negative and 2 positive remarks, the AC received 23 negative and 9 positive comments and the AM only 10 negative and no positive notes.

As for the number of notes presented on the three largest parties, both private networks produced highly balanced results: Televisa presented 995 notes on the PRI, 1,013 on AC and 861 on AM, while TV Azteca presented 1,065 notes on the PRI, 1,025 on AC and 944 on AM. This balance in the provision of information became even clearer in the case of the public TV Channel 11, where only one single note out of 524 presented during the campaign was accounted for (being negative for the AC).

Thus, if for many decades TV channels never did show any alternative version of domestic politics to the official one presented, by 1997 and 2000 television became essential for presenting and transmitting the most relevant positions involved in these electoral races.⁶⁵ Until the 1990s the political liberalisation process had had little impact on television –

⁶⁵ See Manuel Alejandro Guerrero, (2000) www.pulso.org/Espanol/Archivo/

though the increasingly complex political arena might have forced television to maintain a minimum of consideration for the opposition parties, which were gaining strength. This does not mean that television remained unchanged during the period under consideration in this chapter. Actually, after the crisis of 1982, but especially during the presidency of Salinas de Gortari, television moved its loyalties from a general support to the regime to a more focused support to the presidential figure, as discussed in Chapter Four. The political competition among new forces and the economic upheavals, which eroded the old corporatist structures, made it rational for television to strengthen its relationship with the president in order to maintain the benefits. Especially with President Salinas the benefits allocated to different sectors came less and less through the old corporatist mechanisms, and more from a direct intervention from the Executive —or the president himself (an example being the social programme for poverty alleviation, *Solidaridad*). This picture was finally altered by the coincidence of two important factors. On the one hand, a new scenario of economic competition that radically altered the quasi-monopolistic conditions in which private television in Mexico had been developing for decades. On the other, a political reform that amended the electoral law and granted the political parties the largest amount of resources ever for investing in political advertising, a business from which the largest networks hoped to obtain large profits.

Under these new circumstances, political openness became a better option for a new generation of young entrepreneurs more concerned with doing profitable business than on preserving old political loyalties; especially if under the new economic circumstances those political loyalties could not secure *per se* the traditional benefits that they had in past decades. In this general context, it became wiser to turn the political campaigns into a highly profitable economic enterprises and to turn democracy into a successful economic business.

Chapter Eight

Consolidating the Trend: Radio and Political Openness, 1994-2000

As was seen in Chapter Five, since the late 1980s there had been a sustained growth in the number of concessions for operating new commercial radio stations in a time of general economic depression, in which the publicity market share of the radio had been kept at an average level of 12 percent a year. While such a situation gave way to the development of new strategies, such as creating corporate alliances among radio networks, and asking for formal support from the Secretariat of Transports and Communications for AM stations, in the specific case of the news broadcasts some stations decided to try attractive combinations between innovative formats (a feature that some news broadcasts were adopting since the late 1980s) with more open contents. Without becoming the rule among all the radio stations, these were the first steps of the radio towards openness and plurality in the way in which information was presented on the news broadcasts. The present chapter deals precisely with the consolidation of these trends.

There are basically two key reasons that explain the consolidation of the *apertura* on the Mexican radio stations: on the one hand, a further and stronger economic crisis that caused radio's share in the publicity market to drop from an already low 12 percent during the early 1990s to a dramatic 9.6 percent between 1995 and 2000. Radio networks not only decided to carry further their corporate alliances policy, but they also tried new formulae in their transmissions that comprised of constant modifications, not only of the programming, but of the whole orientation of the stations. At the same time, the largest radio networks diversified their investments towards other areas of communication technologies, especially towards cable and satellite transmissions. On the other hand, as in the case of TV, the Electoral Reform of 1996 that granted the largest amount of money ever for campaign advertising on the media, became a crucial incentive towards consolidating the political openness on radio, since being the media with the widest penetration throughout the country—and cheaper than TV for ad insertion—all parties were eager to buy radio time for their spots. The outcome was that the strong competition for resources led to an extremely

balanced, impartial and open transmission of the political campaigns on the radio both in 1997 and 2000.

Further Crisis on the Radio

An important study on the composition and consumption patterns of the radio audiences in Mexico was carried out in February 1996 by Indemerc-Louis Harris, one of the most famous public opinion poll companies.¹ The outcome of the research, which took into account both rural and urban population segments, showed that radio was listened to in 97 percent of the households in the country, independently of the social conditions, and that the highest rating time is between 8:00 and 18:00 hours, except on weekends. There is actually an average of 2.6 radio sets per household, (though in rural areas this average lowers to 1.33 sets), and people listen to the radio around 4.5 days per week. Each day, fifty-six percent of men listen to the radio for an average of 2.3 hours, while fifty-nine percent of women do so for an average of 2.8 hours.² Radio is by far the media with the strongest penetration in the country, though at the same time, since radio programming is less centralised than that of the TV channels in general there is no single radio programme that enjoys the national ratings of a TV soap-opera or a TV news broadcast. Radio has a more local or regional character that makes it "closer" to the individual than the nationwide TV stations located in Mexico City. However, in this chapter I deal mostly with Mexico City radio networks, not because they have been the only ones to be on the vanguard of political openness (local radio stations have fought important "battles" against local power, as in Yucatan or Baja California Norte), but because it has been in Mexico City where the headquarters of the most important networks of the country have been located. Even when not having the majority of their stations there, by 1996 all major radio networks had at least one station in operation in the capital, making Mexico City a major field of competition for the largest radio groups.

Since the late 1980s the advertising expenditure for radio in Mexico has remained stagnant at an annual average of 12 percent. As discussed in Chapter Five, this situation has already

¹ Indemerc-Louis Harris, *Estudio de Hábitos y Consumo de los Radioescuchas de la República Mexicana*, Mexico City, 1996.

² *Ibid.*

created pressure amongst radio entrepreneurs since more stations entered into operation during those same years, in a situation in which also the general performance of the economy was quite unstable and precarious. If between 1991 and 1993, during the most successful years of the Salinas administration, the economy seemed to be slowly recovering from a decade of instability and frequent crises, the political upheavals that shook Mexico during 1994 eroded the still fragile economic advances and unleashed the deepest crisis in decades (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1
Real GDP Growth, Inflation and Exchange Rates , 1994-1999

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
GDP Growth	4.5	-6.2	5.1	6.8	4.8	3.7
Inflation	7.1	56.9	26.44	15.7	18.7	12.32
Exchange Rate (Mex. Pesos per USDS 1)	\$ 3.37	\$ 6.40	\$ 7.59	\$ 7.92	\$9.96	\$ 9.51

Source: Elaborated with data from INEGI, Banco de Informacion Economica, *Sistema de cuentas nacionales. Produccion, Inflacion y Precios al Consumidor*, Mexico City (www.inegi.org.mx) and Banco de Mexico, Mexico City (www.banxico.org.mx).

The immense recession of the Mexican economy during the years after the 1995 crisis had a direct impact on all areas of economic life and affected the already fragile landscape of the radio industry (Table 8.2). The radio's share of the advertising market was drastically reduced from 12 percent to only 9.6 percent between 1995 and 2000. Moreover, the investments in the whole media advertising market were reduced in real terms, since such a figure amounted to USD \$1.935 Billion in 1994 and fell to only USD \$1.118 Billion in 1995, thus making of an already low nine percent an even smaller proportion of a reduced advertising national market. The mass media advertising market only started to recover in 2000 the pre-1995 levels of investment, though in the case of the radio that is still not the case. In 1994 this type of media was allocated USD \$ 232.194 Million of advertising investment (equivalent to its 12 percent share of this market), while in 2000 such investments amounted to USD \$ 226.100 Million (equivalent to a 10 percent share).

The magnitude of this crisis pushed the radio industry to further develop the strategies they had already been practising for attracting ratings, improving their financial performance and adapting to adverse conditions of competition. If before the crisis of 1995 the stations were already establishing strategic alliances and modifying the contents of their programming to make them more attractive (with the implication of exploring the limits of tolerance of the regime in relation to the ways of transmitting and presenting information on their news broadcasts), as a result of the crisis the entrepreneurs decided not only to carry such strategies even further, but they also decided to diversify their investments either in other countries or in other areas of mass media (mostly Cable TV, satellite TV and other forms of Direct Broadcasting System transmissions –DBS). In the short term, however, many were constrained to dismiss a large number of their employees, especially in their AM stations.³

Table 8.2

Private Investments on Media Advertising

	1997	1998	1999 (e)	2000 (e)
	74%	75%	75%	74%
	10%	10%	10%	10%
	7%	6%	6%	6%
	4%	4%	4%	4%
	5%	5%	4%	4%
	N.A.	N.A.	1%	2%
Total in USD \$ Billion	1.634	1.534	1.879	2.261

N.A.= Not available.

(e) Estimated values.

Source: AMAP, Información estadística de la publicidad en México, *Inversión publicitaria de la iniciativa privada, 1990-2000*, Mexico City, AMAP, 2000.

³ Although no exact data exists on the number of dismissed employees in the area of radio due to the crisis, all eight radio entrepreneurs interviewed accepted that a common measure taken by them was to reduce their number of collaborators in the stations. They did provide the author with the number of employees that were fired from their stations, but at times, I must say, such figures did not coincide with the eventual published numbers on the printed press.

Even before 1995, AM stations were facing difficult times. Paradoxically, the number of AM stations had been growing while their ratings had been constantly falling since the early 1990s.⁴ As discussed in Chapter Five, FM stations had been displacing AM stations in audience preferences since 1985. The strategy of the latter for recovering audiences and surviving during the late 1980s was essentially to reduce music broadcasting and adopt more talk-radio formats in their programming. The strategy worked well for some years and they recovered some rating points. However, since the early 1990s FM stations also started to adopt talk-radio formats, especially in their news broadcasts, and were thus once again transmitting very similar programming to the disadvantage of course of AM stations.

Therefore, the generally difficult economic situation of the radio industry was aggravated for the AM stations since it combined with the already continuous fall in their ratings. In January 1995 the rating points of the AM stations amounted to 5.16, while those for FM stations reached 12.91 rating points.⁵ Before the crisis, the concessionaires had also started to apply to the Secretariat of Communications and Transports to obtain the technical and administrative support to make sure that those stations that were located within the AM band could also transmit on the FM band (depending, of course, on the availability of frequencies on each market), and in this way many programmes which were successful on certain stations within one band could also be heard on the other.

In October 1994 the Secretariat of Communications and Transports announced that technical facilities and support would be given to the stations for transmitting on both bands and in this way “respond to the crisis of the AM band stations”.⁶ Nevertheless, after the 1995 economic crisis the concessionaires, through the then chairman of the CIRT, Emilio Nassar, openly asked for stronger measures from the Secretariat of Communications and Transports and to avoid causing the stations to go into bankruptcy and to avoid job losses.⁷

⁴ According to some of the entrepreneurs interviewed, such “irrational growth in the number of AM stations” when it was “evident for any true entrepreneur” that these stations were losing audiences, responds to the fact that many AM concessions were given to politicians with no experience on radio or to close friends of theirs at the local level (Interview with Guillermo Salas, August 2000, and Share-holder of *MVS TV*, August 2000). Though I could not find definitive proof of this, some hints in favour of this argument are discussed by Fatima Fernandez (see note 10 below).

⁵ “Los públicos de la radio”, in *El universo de la radio*, vol.2, no.2, Summer, Mexico City 1996, p.30.

⁶ “Lineamientos generales de apoyo técnico a las estaciones de radio localizadas en la banda de amplitud modulada”, *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, October 2nd 1994.

⁷ *Boletín Radiofonico-TV*, No. 422, August, Mexico City: CIRT, 1995, p.10.

However, the critical situation of the radio forced many stations to dismiss a considerable number of their employees.⁸ For instance, by mid-1995 Grupo Radio Centro —of Francisco Aguirre—dismissed two hundred employees; Radiópolis, the radio division of Televisa, dismissed forty employees; Grupo Agentes de Radio y Televisión —ARTSA of Diaz Romo—fired more than one hundred and fifty employees; Organización Radio Fórmula —of Rogerio Azcarraga—dismissed thirty employees; Nucleo Radio Mil —of the Salas family—fired more than one hundred and fifty employees; and, Radiodifusión Red, the network transmitting *Monitor*, fired fifty employees in order to reduce expenditure. These radio groups were, of course, not the only ones to reduce their personnel, since more dramatic situations were registered in some local radio stations in provinces like Oaxaca, Chiapas, San Luis Potosi or Michoacan,⁹ however, since these groups represent some of the strongest radio organisations in Mexico, these examples are illustrative of the general situation that was being experienced in radio during 1995.

It is interesting to note that in spite of such a situation, the federal government continued to award concessions for operating more commercial radio stations.¹⁰ In 1995, the worst moment of the crisis, there were given sixty-seven concessions for operating radio stations, while, for instance in 1990 and 1991, years that registered a GDP growth of 4.4 percent and 3.6 (and with a share of 12 percent of the advertising market), fifty-two and twenty-four concessions respectively were awarded.

Thus between 1994 and 1995 the total sum of commercial concessions grew from 1,068 to 1,135 in a moment when the radio's advertising market was at a very low level both in relative (decreasing from 12 to 9 percent) and in absolute terms, falling from a total share of USD \$ 232.194 Million to only USD \$ 100.620 Million in those years (Table 8.3).

⁸ For a careful account on the loss of jobs on different kinds of media see Alejandro Olmos, "La marea de la crisis economica arrastra a los medios mexicanos", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, n.40, May-July, Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía. 1995.

⁹ See Gabriel Sosa Plata, "Focos de emergencia para la radio mexicana", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, no.43, February-April. Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía 1996.

¹⁰ A constant criticism found during the interviews of the radio licensees is that the government not only continued to award concessions in highly discretionary ways without regarding the "market structure", but also that a good number of those concessions had been awarded to politicians, and not to experienced radio entrepreneurs. The researcher Fatima Fernandez has also pointed out this fact in the case of the Grupo Radiorama, a network founded in 1974 that now controls 161 stations. According to her findings, a large number of the concessions for operating those stations have been awarded to politicians that collaborated in the Echeverria and Lopez Portillo administrations. See Fatima Fernandez Christlieb (1991), pgs. 174-175.

Table 8.3

Number of Radio Concessions in Operation and Investment on Radio, 1994-2000

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of New Radio Stations	1,068	1,135	1,145	1,137	1,143	1,146
Radio's Share of Advertising Investment	12%	9%	9%	10%	10%	10%
Advertising Investment on Radio in Absolute Terms (USD \$ Millions)	232,194.6	100,620	113,691.33	163,431.3	153,349.9	187,909.1

Source: Elaborated with data from AMAP, *Informacion estadistica de la publicidad en México, Inversion publicitaria de la iniciativa privada, 1990-2000*, Mexico City, AMAP, 2000, and data from Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes, Estadisticas, *Estaciones de radio y television, concesionadas, permisionadas y complementarias en operacion*, Mexico City (www.sct.gob.mx).

Under such circumstances, the position of the concessionaires was made very clear in the words of one of its most well known members, the vice-chairman of MVS Radio, Adrian Vargas Guajardo, who was at that time also the president of the Mexico City Radio Broadcasters Association (ARDF),

The market [for radio] is now saturated and there are cities where it becomes impossible to establish one more station... If I was in a position in government, I would not award any more concessions, since I believe that the actual number of stations is adequate, and all attempts to increase it will decrease the profitability transforming the radio from a healthy business that provides good service to the community, into an industry with more problems.¹¹

¹¹ *El Financiero*, November 15th 1996.

Another important dilemma for the radio stations is that they cannot compete for audiences against television. Even as an information source, television is preferred to radio. According to the study carried out in 1996 by the IFE and the *Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones Jurídicas de la UNAM*, when individuals were asked what their usual sources of information on politics were, 59 percent answered TV as opposed to only 17 percent who answered that it was radio.¹² Obviously this trend was reflected also in the allocation of investments. During the 1980s the share of investments on advertising for television remained constant at 65 percent, while that of the radio stayed at 12 percent. However, after the 1995 crisis, there was a drastic change in the advertising market structure in the media. As Table 8.2 above shows, while the share of radio has fallen and remained low for the period 1995-2000, that for TV has raised from 65 percent in 1994 to an average of 74.5 percent between 1995 and 2000. This trend does not seem to be reversible and has, thus, placed greater pressure on the radio licensees for trying more innovative strategies and more daring programming, including, of course, news broadcasts. Let us now turn to the analysis of the responses of the radio organisations to these challenges and difficulties.

A common response was to accentuate some of the courses of action that were already being practised by the concessionaires since the early 1990s in order to become more competitive and reduce costs. One such practice was the formation of alliances amongst different radio organisations. The aim of such alliances was to capture a larger clientele by offering more attractive publicity plans or "publicity packages" to the announcers for buying air-time and transmitting their commercials in more stations and, therefore, into wider areas. Most of these alliances were temporal and they did not include a fusion of capital or the merging of shares. Another strategy was to diversify the investments in other areas of the media industry, especially Cable TV and other new radio technologies and satellite communication services, like DBS transmissions.

Some of the first alliances were, for instance, that of the network Crystal with the Grupo Cima in 1992 in order to have control over 80 stations in 21 states; in March 1993 Crystal-Cima allied with Grupo Sociedad Mexicana de Radio (Somer) and together they operated

¹² IFE and IJJ-UNAM, *Reporte sobre consumo de medios en México*, UNAM, 1996; and Omar Raul Martinez, "Datos duros sobre monitoreos de coberturas electorales", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, vol.63, May-June. Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía 2000.

113 stations. However, in May 1995 Crystal decided to separate from the alliance, leaving only the Cima-Somer network. In 1994 Radio Mil established an alliance with ARTSA in order to offer the announcer the possibility of transmitting their advertising in ten stations in Mexico City (three of NRM and three of ARTSA). However, the alliance did not work out as expected and ARTSA decided to rent its three stations in Mexico City to the network ACIR,¹³ which then controlled 150 radio stations nationwide. ACIR, whose main shareholder was Francisco Ibarra, then decided to re-structure its corporation and create three divisions: ACIR Radio, TV Integral (composed of twelve cable systems, five UHF systems and two terrestrial local channels), and Multicom (various communication systems for companies). In 1996 ACIR sold 49.5 percent of its shares to Carlos Slim Helu, the main shareholder of Telmex, through his corporation Grupo Financiero Inbursa. The aim of such capitalisation was to get fresh resources for the launching of a DTH TV project of Radio ACIR and compete with Televisa, Multivision, Medcom and Ultrasenial.¹⁴

After the separation of Grupo ACIR, Nucleo Radio Mil decided to sell two of its stations in Mexico City, XECO-AM and XEUR-AM to Radiorama (of Javier Pereda and Javier Perez de Anda) in 1994 and to establish in 1995 an alliance with Estereo Cien, a station belonging to the Somer Group. The main shareholder of the latter, Edilberto Huesca Perrotin, became Joint Director General of the NRM. In April 1995, Radiorama established the Comercializadora Multimedia de Comunicacion with Grupo Siete (of Javier Sanchez Campuzano, major shareholder also of Grupo Crystal) in order to offer the announcers seven radio stations located in seven different cities, spaces on four newspapers (including the *San Diego Hoy* edited in Spanish in San Diego, CA), two monthly publications, and two frontier-city channels, Channel 33 of Tijuana and Channel 2 of Reynosa-Matamoros.¹⁵

Grupo Radio Centro, which operates three large radio networks, (one of them being Organizacion Impulsora de Radio), comprised one hundred and five stations nationwide, owns thirteen stations in Mexico City, three of which it acquired from Medcom

¹³ *Reforma*, November 2nd 1995.

¹⁴ *Reforma*, March 21st 1996.

¹⁵ It is interesting to note that Radiorama had already allied with Grupo Siete and Grupo Radio Centro to create Proyecto Cosmovision in 1992 to bid for the public "media package" that included IMEVISION (Channels 13, and 7, and Channel 2 of Chihuahua), the Theatre Company COTSA and the newspaper *El Nacional*.

Corporation.¹⁶ In 1995 Medcom sold three stations in Mexico City and one in Guadalajara which also comprised of Radiodifusion Red. This network transmitted *Monitor*. Initially GRC paid USD \$ 33 Million for 33 percent of the shares of Radiodifusion Red in May 1995, and paid US \$ 42.4 Million (due to the devaluation of prices) for the other 67 percent of the shares in January 1996. Radiodifusion Red disappeared and a new division was created within GRC called INFORED. During this situation of change Jose Gutierrez Vivo (the newscaster of *Monitor*) assumed 27 percent of the total shares of GRC. Moreover, INFORED is supposed to provide information services to more than one hundred radio stations who have been affiliated to the group for ten years and, such services extend to the remaining stations of Medcom Corporation. For its part, Medcom used the resources to invest in its DTH TV project with satellite services. After the acquisition of INFORED, GRC re-structured its corporation as following: Organizacion Impulsora de Radio (with 105 affiliated and personally owned stations in the country), Organizacion Radio Centro (which controls nine stations in Mexico City), and INFORED (with three stations in Mexico City and repeaters in Monterrey and Guadalajara). GRC created another company, Ameritel, in 1998 to compete for the further opening of the local telephone services, investing therein more than US \$ 70 Million.¹⁷

For JV Corporacion, (of which MVS Radio is part along with forty-two radio stations), the option was to expand its TV division, Multivision. In September 1994 it obtained the concession to operate satellite TV services, and in March 1995 Mutivision announced its association with Televisao Abril do Brasil, Organizacion Cisneros of Venezuela, and Hughes Communications to create the Galaxy Consortium Latin America in order to provide the whole region with DTH TV, called DirecTV Latin America, through the Galaxy III-R Satellite (of Hughes Comm.).¹⁸ In 1996 MVS Radio allied with Grupo Imagen (owned by Jose Luis Fernandez Herrera) to offer a larger audience to the announcers. In April 1997 MVS Radio and the NRM decided to create a commercial alliance to offer the

¹⁶ The old radio network, Radio Programas de Mexico, of Clemente Serna, was merged with others of his businesses –Radiodifusion Red, Super Red, Teleprogramas de Mexico and Corporacion Telepatia de TV—to create Medcom Corporation in March 1993.

¹⁷ *La Jornada*, June 4th 1998.

¹⁸ Taken from Mejia Barquera, "Disputa por la TV restringida via satelite", in *El Nacional*, November 13th 1995.

announcers eleven radio stations in Mexico City.¹⁹ The alliance resulted so convenient that in July 1999, MVS bought 25 percent of the shares of NRM. In November 1997, MVS and Grupo Imagen decided to merge their shares,²⁰ though in 1999 the venture was ruptured. Finally, another interesting alliance during this period occurred between Televisa's Radiopolis and Radiodifusoras Asociadas (Rasa) in October 1996. According to the terms of the alliance, the programmes produced by Radiopolis could be transmitted on more than seventy radio stations belonging to Rasa in the country.²¹ During the end of 1998, Radiopolis decided to study a new strategy, that of selling franchises of its stations to local radio stations. This was put into practice in June 1999.

Many radio corporations decided not only to join with others to form alliances for advertising or for investing in other communication technologies, but a third strategy led by some of the strongest groups was the exploration of foreign radio markets, be it either by selling their programmes to radio stations in other countries, or by investing directly in the acquisition of shares from foreign radio organisations. Televisa's radio division, Radiopolis, signed important contracts with Radio East Shanghai in 1996 through which the Mexican network recorded and sold programmes especially designed for Chinese audiences.²² Besides the Chinese radio market, Radiopolis increased the distribution of its programmes in Spain, Guatemala, Costa Rica and El Salvador.²³ Organizacion Radio Formula also decided to expand into the U.S.A. in 1994 by acquiring and affiliating thirty-five radio stations mainly, but not uniquely, along the border, and providing them with programming elaborated in Mexico City.

A fourth important strategy applied by the radio organisations was to modify the content of their programming and, in many cases, this implied deep structural changes within the stations. These changes took place mostly between 1995 and 1996. For instance, in 1995 two of Radiopolis' stations, XEQ-AM and XEX-AM, transformed from broadcasting modern music in Spanish and talk-radio programmes into talk-radio and Mexican music

¹⁹ *El Financiero*, April 5th 1997. The stations are Stereo Rey, Globo 105, Pulsar FM, Radio Activo and XELA of MVS Radio, and Sabrosita 590, Radio Mil, Radio Sinfonola, Morena, Stereo Cien and Codigo 100.9 of NRM.

²⁰ *El Financiero*, November 24th 1997.

²¹ *El Financiero*, October 12th 1996.

²² *El Financiero*, October 15th 1996.

respectively. However, in 1996 XEX-AM changed its programming again to modern pop music in Spanish. Grupo Acir also changed the programming of two stations, XHSH-FM and XEVOZ-AM from broadcasting modern music in Spanish and group-Latin music, to popular northern-style music and Mexican folk music. RASA also changed the programming of its XEN-AM station from modern English pop to talk-radio broadcasting. Grupo Siete replaced the transmission of group-Latin music with talk-radio programming on its XEUR-AM station. Organizacion Radio Formula also transformed the programming of its XESM-AM station from modern pop –both in English and Spanish—into Mexican and international ballads. However, maybe the most notorious change was that of Nucleo Radio Mil's XHSON-FM a station called "Rock 101" (since it was located at 100.9 FM). This station was one of the pioneers in broadcasting less commercial and modern rock music and attracted the kind of audience that seldom found other alternatives on the radio. However, since the station had constantly been losing announcers, the executives of the NRM decided to transform it into a more "general pop music broadcaster". In August 1996 a group of three hundred youngsters organised a rock concert outside the facilities of the NRM in order to protest at the closure of the station.²³ However, "Rock 101" was replaced by "Codigo 100.9", and later to "100 Punto Nueva Era". That same year, another five stations decided to change their programming and formats as well. Along 1997 these changes continued.

As for the changes in the news broadcasts, many stations were also trying out innovative adaptations in the formats and hiring well known professional journalists as newscasters. In Mexico City, new programmes appeared on current affairs debates, some news broadcasts decided to expand their transmissions time, and journalists and well known and provocative newscasters were constantly moving from one station to another. For instance, between 1996 and 2000 Jose Cardenas transferred from Grupo Acir's *Informativo Panorama* to Radiopolis' *Detrás de la Noticia* and later to Radio 13's *Al Momento*, and finally, at the end of the period studied here, to Radio Formula's *Jose Cardenas Informa*. Enrique Quintana, director of the economic section of the newspaper *Reforma*, was hired by Grupo Radio

²³ For the name of the stations in these countries see Gabriel Sosa Plata, "Panorama estable para la radio mexicana en 1996", *Revista Mexicana de Comunicacion*, no.47, February-March, Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía, 1997.

²⁴ *Reforma*, August 16th 1996.

Centro (GRC) as director of News and Information Projects in February 1997. This was part of a whole new project of transformation within GRC in its news broadcastings, in which the key element was the acquisition of the Radiodifusion Red Network—the one that produced the news broadcast *Monitor*—from Clemente Serna at the beginning of 1995. Radiodifusion Red was composed of XERED-AM, XERED-FM, XEDKR-AM in Guadalajara, and afterwards it was renamed Infored, under the direction of the journalist Jose Gutierrez Vivo.²⁵ In 1997, Infored was transmitting its *Monitor* news broadcast in the 42 most important cities of México, covering almost 80 percent of the market.²⁶ Moreover, the transmission of its evening edition was lengthened from 18:00 to 21:00 hours to 17:00 to 21:00 hours daily.

Televisa's Radiopolis also decided to hire important journalists to direct and edit its news broadcasts. Its major news broadcast *Detrás de la Noticia* hired figures such as Carlos Monsivais and Carlos Fuentes, and in order to appeal to the youth, the news broadcast started to be transmitted also in the Pop Rock station WFM since November 1997. However, in 1999 the journalist Ricardo Rocha—Vice-President of Radiopolis, who showed on Televisa's Channel 2 the videos that implicated the federal police in the murder of peasants in the southern state of Guerrero—decided to leave the corporation after 27 years of collaboration. He moved to Grupo Acir, where he conducted the major news broadcast, called *Detrás de la Noticia*, since he had the rights over the name of the news broadcast of Televisa, and under the same name he founded an information agency.

The MVS Group also became more aggressive in its competition for audiences in its news broadcasts, and along with the already popular *Para Empezar* (simultaneously transmitted on MVS TV Channel AS), the network decided to present information capsules from CNN live every hour. In December 1999, with the break up between Grupo Imagen and MVS, the group of journalists that had conducted the three editions of the MVS news broadcast *Para Empezar*—Pedro Ferriz, Javier Solorzano and Carmen Aristegui—joined Grupo Imagen in the creation of *Imagen Informativo*, its news editions. Other networks decided to hire already famous figures who, even when not directing news broadcasts, were famous enough to attract audiences. Such was the case of Hector Martínez Serrano, the anchorman

²⁵ See Chapter Five.

²⁶ Gabriel Sosa Plata, "Se vitamina el cuadrante radiofonico mexicano", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, No.52, January-February, Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía, 1998.

of the famous music programme *Reloj Musical* of Televisa's XEW, who left the station in 1997 in order to conduct the information and entertainment programme *Buenos Dias* of Organización Radio Formula, the network that was able to hire most of the big names that, for one reason or another, had left Televisa's Radiópolis.

To sum up, these were the different forms in which the Mexican radio corporations were responding to the difficulties, (some of which were already present since the late 1980s, like the stagnation of its publicity market's share in a situation of the continuous growth in the number of stations and of general economic instability), that consolidated after the 1995 economic crisis. The radio organisations not only continued with strategies already in practice since the early 1990s—the formation of alliances for advertising and the change of programming—but they also tried to diversify their investments into other areas of the communications industry and into other radio markets abroad. In the short term, many stations were also constrained to dismiss a number of their employees.

A further aspect that will be discussed in the following part, is that which deals with the pressure that the radio stations suffered from the regime due to the further openness that was brought about by the already discussed competition amongst the stations. This will be discussed within the context of the electoral campaigns of 1997 and 2000.

The Campaigns on Radio

The Electoral Reform of 1996 established new legal dispositions to secure equity in the access of the parties to the broadcasting media. The Reform of 1996 authorised the IFE through its Commission of Broadcasting to carry out a constant monitoring of the way the media presented information on the political campaigns. In December 1996 in order to secure balanced transmissions the IFE made public a series of fairness criteria to be followed by the media in relation to the political information. Through these criteria, the IFE expected the CIRT to induce its members to present information related to the campaigns in relatively neutral and balanced ways.²⁷

²⁷ See Chapter Four.

As discussed in Chapters Four and Five, during the 1994 campaigns, the monitoring of the IFE was not enough to induce more balanced and impartial transmissions. However, this time it was different since the IFE also authorised a large amount of resources for the parties, to be spent on broadcasting ads. According to the 1996 Law, there are three modalities for spending on media advertising. Firstly, to the regular fifteen minutes advertising that each party can have monthly in the electronic media (Article 44), the 1996 Reform established that during electoral periods the parties could avail of up to 200 hours on TV and 250 on radio when a general election takes place, and up to 100 hours on TV and 125 on radio when a mid-term election is under way (Article 47, paragraph I-a and I-b). With this time, the parties can produce programmes of 5, 7 and 10 minutes. Secondly, Article 47 paragraph I-c, establishes that during electoral periods the IFE will buy, and distribute to the parties each month up to ten thousand ads on radio and four hundred on TV. The duration of each of these spots will be of twenty seconds and are to be destined for advertising only. Both modalities of time—that allocated for programmes and that for advertising ads—should be distributed amongst the parties as follows: 4 percent to parties without representation in Congress (Article 47, paragraph 2), 30 percent on equal terms for all the parties and 70 percent according to their share of votes in the previous electoral process (Article 47, paragraph 3). Of course, all this time must be paid to the stations. Thirdly, these types of media spaces, bought and distributed to the parties by the IFE, does not exclude the possibility for the parties to buy additional advertising time on the media, as stated by Article 48. For instance, for the 1997 elections the Congress authorised the IFE to distribute US \$ 278 million to the parties, five times more than in 1994. These funds were allocated among the parties as follows: 30 percent on equal terms for all parties and 70 percent according to their share of the votes in the previous electoral process. In this way, the PRI obtained US \$111.5 million, the PAN US \$ 66 million, the PRD US \$ 49 million, and the rest went to the other parties. Of this money, the parties used large sums to buy ads. If in 1994, the parties spent 25 percent of their funds for broadcasting media ads, in 1997 they spent 55 percent.²⁸ In the case of the radio, the three largest sources of income during 1997 were the advertising of the long distance telephone service companies—a service that for the first time ceased to be a monopoly of the recently privatised Teléfonos de México—

amounting to 12.5 percent of the total, the advertising of the banks for obtaining the recently created retirement funds for workers, amounting to 8.5 percent of the total, and the electoral advertising amounting to 6.7 percent of the total.²⁹

As seen in the previous section, the radio stations were making majors adjustments in their news broadcasting formats and teams and in other information programmes. One of their principal aims was that of attracting the highest ratings possible during the campaigns. Once the IFE had granted a large amount of resources to be spent by the media for the campaign of 1997, the radio stations started to compete for those resources. A general course of action was announced by the president of the Radio Broadcasters Association of the Valley of Mexico (*Asociacion de Radiodifusores del Valle de México*, ARVM), Adrian Vargas Guajardo. This course of action was based on four strategies: the modernisation of radio services, the promotion of the advantages of advertising on radio, the organisation for awarding recognition for the best commercials on the radio, and the development of three opinion studies in relation to voting tendencies in the 1997 race for the government of Mexico City.³⁰ Moreover, in co-ordination with the CIRT, the ARDV announced its public compromise to present the outcomes of the exit poll of the elections in Mexico City on the evening of July 6th, between 21:30 and 22:00 hours.³¹

All these efforts of the radio to capture more audience attention and more resources from the parties and from other announcers, reflected on a relatively balanced presentation of information on the radio news broadcasts. Nevertheless, at a local level, some radio stations were still openly in favour of the PRI. If one takes into consideration the form in which the elections of 1997 were reported in all the country's radio stations, a clear bias in favour of the PRI becomes immediately noticeable (Tables 8.5 and 8.6).

²⁸ Information provided by Margarita Moreno Lopez, Deputy-Director of Radio Broadcasting at the Direccion Ejecutiva de Perrogativas y Partidos Politicos of the IFE.

²⁹ *Adcebra*, no. 56, October 1996, pgs 5-8.

³⁰ *La Jornada*, February 24th 1997.

³¹ *Ibidem*

Table 8.5
Coverage Time for Parties on Radio News Broadcasts in all the Country, April 13th - July 3rd 1997

	PRI	PRD	PAN	PT	PVEM	PDM	PPS	PFCRN
Time	263h 51'	136h 08'	139h 41'	33h 46'	15h 05'	8h 34'	8h 55'	10h 47'
	17"	59"	26"	18"	51"	21"	07"	37"
Average	42.67%	22.07%	22.65%	5.47%	2.45%	1.39%	1.45%	1.75%

Source: IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación, April 13th to July 3rd 1997.*

Table 8.6
Number of Notes on the Parties on Radio Broadcasts in all the Country, April 13th - July 3rd 1997

	PRI	PRD	PAN	PT	PVEM	PDM	PPS	PFCRN	Total
Notes	5,280	3,318	3,012	822	435	294	259	381	13,801
Average	38.2%	24%	21.8%	5.9%	3.1%	2.2%	1.9%	2.7%	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación, April 13th to July 3rd 1997.*

This aspect of radio made it the broadcasting medium that in certain areas was courageously presenting controversial material and direct criticisms against the regime—as in the case of the stations located in major cities or on the frontier—but also an openly supportive medium for the PRI candidates. In certain provinces, radio stations were either under strong pressure from the governors or were closely linked to the local PRI interests, (stations directly owned by *Priistas*).

However, when considering the forms in which the information was presented on the news broadcasts that were transmitted from major cities, the trends towards openness on the radio, already present since 1994, were clearly reinforced. The 1997 electoral campaign involved for the first time a dispute for the government of Mexico City, making the election develop into a sort of “minor presidential race”, and therefore a carefully monitored one. As in 1994, the Radio Broadcast Commission of the IFE carried out monitoring on the ways in which the radio and TV news broadcasts were presenting the information related to the electoral campaigns. In general terms, the information presented on the radio news

broadcasts anchored in the capital was relatively balanced for the largest political competitors. As Tables 8.7 and 8.8 show, when comparing both the time and the number of notes devoted by Mexico City's news broadcasts to each of the three largest parties, it becomes apparent that there was a quite balanced reporting on them.

Table 8.7
Coverage Time for Parties on Radio News Broadcasts in Mexico City, March 16th–July 3rd 1997

	PRI	PRD	PAN	PT	PVEM	PDM	PPS	PFCRN
Time	94h 45'	88h 46'	85h 51'	14h 01'	15h 07'	06h 46'	03h 59'	11h 54'
	37"	09"	08"	20"	20"	15"	20"	22"
Average	29.50%	27.64%	26.73%	4.37%	4.71%	2.11%	1.24%	3.71%

Source: IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*, March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

Table 8.8
Number of Notes on the Parties on Radio News Broadcasts in Mexico City, March 16th–July 3rd 1997

	PRI	PRD	PAN	PT	PVEM	PDM	PPS	PFCRN
Notes	1,450	1,380	1,363	349	525	263	180	338
Average	24.79%	23.60%	23.31%	5.97%	8.98%	4.50%	3.08%	5.78%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*, March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

In the monitoring of the IFE, one very important criteria to be controlled was the "objectivity" of the information released on the news broadcasts, (as may be seen below, for the elections of 2000 the label "objectivity" was replaced by the less controversial term "neutrality" to control the same criterion). By "objectivity", the IFE meant the non-existence of additional remarks or comments by the reporter, the journalist or the newscaster when presenting the news.

This did not imply any restriction on editing the information presented by the news broadcasts, but only implied a more careful presentation of the *news*. If the newscaster or the reporter added any comment to "facts" presented on the news, then such a remark was considered as being non-objective, be it either positive –when supporting– or negative –

when deriding the party or candidate. Table 8.9 below presents the total number of objective and non-objective notes in relation to the total number of notes presented on the parties by the radio news broadcasts transmitted from Mexico City.

Table 8.9
Total Objective and Non-objective Notes Presented on Parties on the Radio News
Broadcasts in Mexico City, March 16th-July 3rd 1997

Party	Number of objective notes	Percentage	Number of non-objective notes	Percentage	Total number of notes	Percentage
PAN	1,245	21.29%	118	2.02%	1,363	23.31%
PRI	1,366	23.36%	84	1.44%	1,450	24.80%
PRD	1,291	22.08%	89	1.52%	1,380	23.60%
PFCR	331	5.66%	7	0.12%	338	5.78%
PT	342	5.85%	7	0.12%	349	5.97%
PVEM	493	8.43%	32	0.55%	525	8.98%
PPS	180	3.08%	0	0%	180	3.08%
PDM	258	4.41%	5	0.09%	263	4.50%
Total	5,506	94.15%	342	5.85%	5,848	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*, March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

The number of non-objective notes represents only a very small percentage of the total amount of notes reported on the parties. The total number of non-objective notes represented only 5.85 percent of the total of notes, however, when analysed separately one may notice that, as Table 8.10 shows, the number of negative non-objective notes far exceeded the number of positive non-objective notes on the parties.

Table 8.10
Non-objective (Positive and Negative) Notes on Parties Presented on Radio News
Broadcasts in Mexico City, March 16th-July 3rd 1997

Party	Positive notes	Percentage	Negative notes	Percentage	Non-objective notes (total)	Percentage
PAN	15	4.39%	103	30.12%	118	34.51%
PRI	16	4.68%	68	19.88%	84	24.56%
PRD	7	2.05%	82	23.98%	89	26.03%
PFCR	4	1.17%	3	0.88%	7	2.05%
PT	1	0.29%	6	1.75%	7	2.05%
PVEM	1	0.29%	31	9.06%	32	9.35%
PPS	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
PDM	1	0.29%	4	1.17%	5	1.46%
Total	45	13.16%	297	86.84%	342	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*, March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

From these tables above, it is possible to see that the PRI was the most favoured party, though only by a slight percentage. The number of positive notes favours the PRI by one note more than the PAN, and the number of negative notes again favours the PRI from amongst the three largest organisations in competition. From their total number of non-objective notes the PAN received 87 percent of negative remarks, the PRD 92 percent, and the PRI 80 percent. When one considers the number of negative notes in relation to the total number of notes, the results still favour the PRI, since this party received 4.6 percent, the PRD 5.9 percent and the PAN 7.5 percent of negative notes out of their total number of notes. Also, when regarding the presentation of news on the radio broadcasts, the disparity among them regarding "objectivity" is really striking (Table 8.11).

Table 8.11
Objective and Non-objective Notes Presented on Radio News Broadcasts in Mexico
City March 16th-July 3rd 1997

News Broadcast	Objective notes	Percentage	Non-objective notes	Percentage	Total of notes	Percentage
Al Momento	605	10.35%	29	0.50%	634	10.84%
Antena Radio	289	4.94%	3	0.05%	292	4.99%
Decision 97	264	4.51%	0	0%	264	4.51%
Detras de la Noticia	271	4.63%	2	0.03%	273	4.67%
En Contacto	105	1.80%	97	1.66%	202	3.45%
Enfoque	423	7.23%	12	0.12%	435	7.44%
Ensalada de Lechuga	197	3.37%	70	1.20%	267	4.57%
Formato 21	119	2.03%	2	0.03%	121	2.07%
Hechos de la Noche	289	4.94%	8	0.14%	297	5.08%
Hora 7	631	10.79%	17	0.29%	648	11.08%
Indice Politico	91	1.56%	6	0.10%	97	1.66%
Las Buenas Noticias	2	0.03%	0	0%	2	0.03%
Linea Directa	248	4.24%	10	0.17%	258	4.41%
Lopez Doriga	169	2.89%	14	0.24%	183	3.13%
Monitor de la Manana	413	7.06%	24	0.41%	437	7.47%
Monitor de la Tarde	224	3.83%	0	0%	224	3.83%
Nino Canun	274	4.69%	0	0%	274	4.69%
Informativo Panorama	279	4.77%	28	0.48%	307	5.25%
Para Empezar	469	8.02%	10	0.17%	479	8.19%
Perfil de la Noticia	144	2.46%	10	0.17%	154	2.63%
Total	5,506	94.15%	342	5.85%	5,848	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación a los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*. March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

The news broadcasts that presented the largest number of non-objective notes were *En contacto* (48%) and *Ensalada de lechuga* (26.2%). As for the rest, there were only another five news broadcasts that presented more than five percent of non-objective notes:

Panorama (9.1%), *Perfil de la noticia* (6.4%), *Indice politico* (6.1%), *Monitor de la mañana* (5.4%), and *Lopez Doriga* (5.4%). As may be seen, only two news broadcasts presented more than ten percent of non-objective notes out of the total number of notes reported. Moreover, in general, some of the news broadcasts transmitting from Mexico City also made innovative additions by opening special sections to report on the campaigns, such as "Agenda Decision 97" within the *Decision 97* news broadcast or "En campana hacia la democracia" within the news broadcast *Para empezar*. The day of the election – July 6th—the news broadcast *Monitor* was transmitting live all day on its internet site on which its star newscaster, Jose Gutierrez Vivo, remained running on air for twenty-seven hours. That same day, the station Cambio 14.40 transmitted live for more than thirty-three hours a programme named *Primer maraton radiofonico por la democracia* on the developments and issues of that electoral journey. Thus, in general, though the information slightly favoured the PRI it was considered by the IFE to be quite a fair and balanced presentation of information. However, such conclusions hide one very important aspect: the pressures that the radio stations received from some regime's officials during the campaign. The pressure by the government on the stations, though it was reduced during the presidency of Zedillo, it did not disappear. Cases of harassment against newscasters, stations and journalists continued. For instance, the journalist José Cárdenas was forced to leave Radio ACIR after he announced the existence of a new guerrilla group, the *Ejército Popular Revolucionario*, in July 1996. There are many other cases of the pressure of regime officials on the radio stations, most of which are documented by the Fundacion Manuel Buendia on its *Actos de Represion contra Periodistas*, which is available also on that Foundation's internet site.³² Maybe one of the most telling examples is the case of *Monitor*. The morning edition of this news broadcast inaugurated a section for discussions on the electoral process and political choices. This was called "Mesas de debate vespertinas" or "Morning debate round-tables". In February 1997, President Zedillo presided a meeting at the PRI headquarters, aimed at making the official presentation of the party's candidates. President Zedillo intervened with a supportive speech for the party's candidates, which was criticised the following morning on many stations, one of which was *Monitor's* round-tables. According to the information provided by a top collaborator of the station, a phone

³² <http://www.cem.itesm.mx/dacs/buendia>

call was received from the Office of the Presidency strongly complaining about such criticism. The outcome was the cancellation of the morning debates.³³ The critics of the President's speech at the PRI were not left "unsanctioned" by the governmental officials in other news broadcasts. For instance, the academic Lorenzo Meyer was dismissed from his weekly collaboration with the news broadcast *Para Empezar* after critically commenting on President Zedillo's intervention.³⁴ According to Meyer, the same day that he made his comment—a Wednesday morning in March 1997—he was told by the anchorman of the news broadcast, Pedro Ferriz de Con, that since they had just received "a phone call from 'the top' [referring to the Office of the Presidency]" demanding his dismissal, the station had no other alternative but to do so.³⁵

In spite of this pressure, a large number of the news broadcasts kept their microphones open to critics and pluralism. After the elections pressure diminished in general, though there were still some cases reported of regime strong men pressurising the stations. Such was the case of the newscaster Nino Canun, who conducted the news programme *¿Y usted qué opina?* on a station of the Organización Radio Centro. In the edition of March 17th 1998, Nino Canun criticised the open manipulation of the information on the Southern state of Chiapas by the journalist Lolita De la Vega in her weekly programme on TV Azteca's Channel 7. Since De la Vega is the wife of the General Secretary of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Industria de Radio y Televisión* (STIRT), Netzahualcóyotl De la Vega, member and former federal deputy of the PRI, and since the employees and workers of most radio stations are affiliated to that union, he had strong influence over many stations. Two days after Canun criticised De la Vega, he was fired from his programme without any formal explanation.³⁶

Thus, the attitude of the concessionaires towards the government was still ambiguous. On the one hand, a good number of them were strongly supporting their freedom within their news broadcasts in order to maintain their credibility and gain larger audiences. This, in turn, translated into higher profits since the news broadcasts are the programmes with the highest advertising tariff rates. Table 8.12 compares normal tariff rates with news

³³ Interview with a top collaborator of *Monitor*, August 2000.

³⁴ Interview with Lorenzo Meyer at El Colegio de México, August 2000.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ *Reforma*, March 20th 1998.

broadcasts tariff rates on six important Mexico City's stations: Radio Formula presents *Lopez Doriga*; Azul 89 presents *Informativo Panorama* ; Stereo Rey presents *Para Empezar* (renamed in 1999 *Informativo MVS*); Radio Red presents *Monitor*; Stereo Cien transmits *Enfoque*; and Radio 13 hired in 2000 Abraham Zabludowsky as newscaster of *Noticiario Abraham Zabludowsky*.

Table 8.12
Tariff Rates for Advertising on Radio*

Radio Station	Regular Tariff for 60 a Seconds Spot		Tariff for a 60 seconds Spot in News Broadcasts	
	1997	2002	1997	2002
Radio 13	\$ 1,350.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 2,700.00	\$ 41,000.00
Radio Formula 103.3 FM	\$ 9,500.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 81,000.00
Azul 89	\$ 2,520.00	\$ 11,942.00	\$ 10,530.00	\$ 69,000.00
Radio Red	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 36,000.00	\$ 78,000.00
Stereo Rey	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 8,400.00	\$ 13,500.00	\$ 60,000.00
Stereo Cien	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 13,800.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 36,300.00

*Six radio stations from Mexico City with important news broadcasts were selected. The prices are shown in Mexican Pesos of March 1997 (US\$ 1=7.92 Pesos) and March 2002 (US\$ 1= 9.20 Pesos).

Source: *Medios Audio Visuales*, no. 153-1, March 1997 and no. 173-1, March 2002. Mexico City: Medios Publicitarios Mexicanos S.A. de C.V.

On the other hand, the “official” position of the concessionaires –through the CIRT—was to subtly remain on the best possible terms with the president. For instance, at the beginning of 1999, the CIRT sent an official invitation to the president to conduct a weekly programme every Saturday morning, *Pláticas del Presidente*, in which he could talk about political, social or economic affairs directly to the audiences.³⁷ The transmission started on Saturday February 20th 1999 at 10:00 a.m.

However, what was clear is that the majority of the concessionaires opposed the constant pressure from the government, especially at a time when radio had not recovered from the

³⁷ *La Jornada*, February 19th 1999.

1995 crisis and all the stations were preparing to compete for ratings and advertising in the next electoral campaigns of 2000. In this way, in August 1998, during the closing of the conferences on Freedom of Expression and Social Responsibility ("Libertad de Expresión y Responsabilidad Social"), organised by the CIRT, the Chamber concluded that in order to secure freedom of expression during the 2000 elections, and due to the enormous importance of such a process for democracy in Mexico, it would be a good idea to renew, in anticipation, at least half of the 1,480 concessions of radio and television that were to expire during the elections year.³⁸ The idea behind this petition was, of course, to avoid governmental pressure on the media with possible threats of holding onto the concessions. The protest was not attended by the government.

At the same time, the electoral race for the presidency was already starting that year with the declarations by the PAN's governor of Guanajuato, Vicente Fox, that he was determined to get the candidacy of his party to run for the presidency. In the case of the PRD, it was clear that Cuauhtémoc Cardenas, actual governor of Mexico City was to become the party's candidate, though the second "on-board the PRD", Porfirio Munoz Ledo immediately started an independent pre-campaign for the candidacy. Finally, within the PRI the situation was more complicated, since the tension between President Zedillo and a large number of old-guard members made it difficult to openly impose on them a candidate through the traditional finger-point process (*Dedazo*). Therefore, by the beginning of 1999 a primary election was announced amongst all the candidates willing to run for the party's presidential candidacy. Four candidates appeared, Francisco Labastida, Manuel Bartlett, Roberto Madrazo and Humberto Roque Villanueva. In this way by mid-1999 there was already a vivid electoral atmosphere with four PRI pre-candidates, two PRD pre-candidates, and one PAN virtual candidate. All of them were running a pre-candidacy primary race for which, since no such process was contemplated within the electoral law, the parties did not receive funds from the IFE. However, the pre-candidates spent large amounts of money on advertising in the media.

It is interesting to note how the media reported on such primary campaigns, since the IFE criteria for evaluating the ways in which they presented information were not yet applicable due to the fact that the formal campaigns for the 2000 elections were to start in January

³⁸ *Excelsior*, August 12th 1998 and *La Cronica de hoy*, August 12th 1998.

2000. The IFE's media monitoring was only authorised to start at the official beginning of the campaigns, and no primary election was contemplated therein. Nevertheless, the newspaper *Reforma* elaborated the monitoring on the ways in which the broadcasting media reported on the parties' internal candidate selection processes. The monitoring covered the final moments of the pre-campaigns of the different pre-candidates from August 16th to November 7th 1999, the day when the PRI presidential candidate was finally selected.³⁹

On the radio, the monitoring covered two kinds of information presented by the media on each pre-candidate: advertising spots bought by the candidates and regular coverage of the pre-candidate's activities on the radio news broadcasts. The radio stations included in the monitoring were: Azul 89, Inolvidable, Radio Formula, Radio Red, 1500 AM, Stereo Rey, and XEW, all of which are transmitted nation-wide. Additionally, two Mexico City radio stations were controlled, Formato 21 and Radio 13. Table 8.13 shows a comparison between the percentage of time devoted to the candidates by the radio news broadcasts and the percentage of time they bought on radio and TV, (since the figure for radio alone was not available), for an almost four week period. This comparison highlights two factors: On the one hand the pre-candidates who bought more time for transmitting their ads were not necessarily always the same as those who received more time on the news broadcasts. On the other, it becomes apparent that the real competition within the PRI was between Francisco Labastida and Roberto Madrazo. Labastida, who had been the Secretary of *Gobernacion* in Zedillo's cabinet was considered to be the President's candidate, while Madrazo –former governor of Tabasco—was on very bad terms with the president.

³⁹ See Chapter Six.

Table 8.13
Advertising Time and Regular News Broadcast Coverage on the Parties' Presidential
Pre-Candidates, August 16th-November 7th 1999

	August 16 th -September 9 th		September 10 th - October 7 th		October 8 th -November 7 th	
Candidate	Time on RNB*	Ad-Time on Radio and TV	Time on RNB*	Ad-Time on Radio and TV	Time on RNB*	Ad-Time on Radio and TV
M. Bartlett	9.66%	14.42%	10.24%	21.6%	13.0%	23.59%
F. Labastida	26.36%	10.63%	19.53%	23.0%	31.76%	24.83%
R. Mardrazo	16.90%	14.95%	14.12%	26.1%	20.77%	30.47%
H. Roque	12.94%	0%	7.15%	0%	12.06%	6.42%
C. Cardenas	15.23%	60%	20.24%	21.3%	9.73%	0.66%
V. Fox	11.77%	0%	24.06%	5.0%	14.40%	3.11%
P.M. Ledo	8.81%	0%	4.43%	0%	1.78%	0%
J. G. Torres	0%	0%	0.19%	3%	0.31%	10.88%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

* Radio News Broadcasts regular coverage.

Source: Elaborated with data from *Reforma*, from August 16th to November 8th 1999.

The relation between the time devoted by the news broadcasts on the pre-candidates and the time they bought on media advertising do not necessarily have any correlation. The *Priista* Mardrazo was the pre-candidate who in general bought more ads in the media, but he never received the largest coverage on the news broadcasts. Another similar case was that of his fellow party member Manuel Bartlett, who never received as much coverage as the time he bought in the media for his ads, and of PRD pre-candidate Cardenas, who during the first term of the monitoring bought 60 percent of the ad-time, but only received 15.23 percent of the news broadcast coverage. Conversely, pre-candidate Labastida always received more regular news coverage time than the time he bought for advertising. However, the two pre-candidates who, almost without buying time for advertising during the whole period, received a great deal of coverage from the news broadcasts were the *Priista* Humberto Roque and the *Panista* Vicente Fox. What becomes clear is that in spite of a seeming favouritism for Labastida, who in two of the terms appears to have more regular coverage

time on the news broadcasts, it was actually Vicente Fox who got more time in relation to the ad-time he bought from the media.⁴⁰

Since, in general terms, the ways in which the media were presenting the information related to the pre-campaigns was relatively impartial, the same behaviour was expected by the parties for the rest of the electoral process. Once becoming the invested candidates of the PAN and the PRD, Vicente Fox and Cuauhtemoc Cardenas at different times, expressed their wish that the media maintain a truly impartial role during the electoral process.⁴¹

As in the previous elections, the Commission of Radio Broadcasting of the IFE organised the monitoring –based upon the already mentioned criteria—on the ways all the broadcasting media reported on the campaigns. When controlling the number of notes devoted to the parties on all the radio news broadcasts of the country between the 4th and the 29th of June 2000, the outcome favours the PRI with 34 percent of all notes on the parties, while those for the Alliance for Change (AC) that supported Fox received 29.4 percent and the Alliance for México (AM) that supported Cardenas obtained 20.8 percent of them (Table 8.14).

⁴⁰ According to three interviewed media executives in August 2000 (Roberto Ordorica; a Top Executive of *Monitor*; and Raul Trejo Delarbre), freedom of the media was not censored and the media could freely print or present whatever kind of information they wanted in relation to the pre-campaigns. However, from the information provided by them it is possible to infer that there were two main criteria followed by the broadcasting media for presenting information relating to the pre-campaigns. On the one hand, though none of the interviewed media executives, (neither these three nor anyone else), referred to any explicit pressure from the government, they all acknowledged that “since Labastida was the President’s true pre-candidate, some special attention must be paid to his activities”. Conversely, since both Madrazo and Bartlett represented openly critical and opposed positions to the President from the PRI, their pre-campaigns could be “not so enthusiastically” covered. On the other hand, and this shows somehow the autonomy of the media in deciding on the news, the preferences of the media entrepreneurs played an important role. Cuauhtemoc Cardenas was highly disliked by the entrepreneurial community, and thus, in spite of paying good money for ad-time, he never received as much coverage time on the news broadcasts. Fox, instead, was the pre-candidate who, in more or less subtle ways, became the preferred pre-candidate for the entrepreneurs, explaining his wide coverage on the RNB, in spite of buying very little ad-time. What is interesting to note here is that, if it is true that no pressure was exercised in the media in favour of the RNB coverage of Labastida and to “uncover” Madrazo, the media were still working through an old inertia. It is important to note as well that, whenever the IFE was not monitoring during these pre-campaigns, the broadcast media were also able to set their own agenda, favouring Fox and disfavours Cardenas.

⁴¹ *La Jornada*, January 22th, 2000 and *Reforma*, March 6th, 2000.

Table 8.14
Percentage of notes on the Parties on Radio News Broadcasts in the Different States,
June 4th –June 29th 2000

State	AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	DS	Total
Aguascalientes	32.4%	33.3%	18.2%	4.7%	6.3%	5.1%	100%
Baja California	32.4%	33.6%	19.2%	4.1%	5.9%	4.8%	100%
Baja California Sur	22.9%	27.8%	32.9%	6.8%	6.1%	3.4%	100%
Campeche	29.0%	36.2%	17.9%	4.4%	7.5%	5.0%	100%
Coahuila	32.0%	39.6%	16.8%	3.3%	5.2%	2.9%	100%
Colima	22.9%	36.3%	25.1%	7.6%	2.4%	5.7%	100%
Chiapas	16.0%	46.5%	20.2%	4.4%	6.0%	6.7%	100%
Chihuahua	34.6%	34.3%	16.7%	4.3%	5.6%	4.4%	100%
Distrito Federal	30.3%	28.5%	22.4%	5.7%	7.5%	5.5%	100%
Durango	22.1%	52.2%	16.7%	1.8%	4.5%	2.7%	100%
Guanajuato	40.3%	31.1%	15.7%	3.6%	6.5%	2.8%	100%
Guerrero	23.6%	40.8%	23.2%	3.6%	5.3%	3.5%	100%
Hidalgo	25.8%	37.8%	19.4%	5.3%	5.4%	6.4%	100%
Jalisco	31.0%	33.7%	17.1%	5.6%	6.8%	5.7%	100%
México	24.3%	36.9%	18.4%	6.1%	9.4%	4.9%	100%
Michoacán	28.6%	30.8%	24.6%	4.7%	7.3%	4.0%	100%
Morelos	29.8%	30.9%	24.7%	3.2%	7.3%	4.1%	100%
Nayarit	28.4%	35.2%	25.5%	4.4%	3.9%	2.6%	100%
Nuevo León	41.2%	29.6%	15.0%	4.9%	5.9%	3.4%	100%
Oaxaca	24.5%	32.3%	28.1%	2.8%	7.5%	4.9%	100%
Puebla	33.9%	36.2%	19.1%	3.1%	4.9%	2.7%	100%
Querétaro	29.4%	34.8%	16.3%	5.7%	7.2%	6.5%	100%
Quintana Roo	24.2%	34.2%	20.3%	7.3%	9.0%	4.9%	100%
San Luis Potosí	25.6%	47.2%	13.4%	3.8%	5.6%	4.4%	100%
Sinaloa	25.5%	37.7%	25.4%	3.1%	4.0%	4.2%	100%
Sonora	26.2%	36.4%	20.8%	4.7%	7.3%	4.5%	100%
Tabasco	19.4%	38.7%	23.7%	5.8%	6.2%	6.2%	100%
Tamaulipas	29.4%	40.3%	17.1%	3.5%	6.9%	2.8%	100%
Tlaxcala	18.7%	23.6%	35.1%	9.7%	6.6%	6.2%	100%
Veracruz	26.5%	33.6%	23.1%	4.9%	7.4%	4.4%	100%
Yucatán	21.4%	50.5%	14.2%	5.0%	5.0%	3.8%	100%
Zacatecas	22.5%	35.1%	31.6%	3.1%	3.6%	4.1%	100%
Total	29.4%	34.0%	20.8%	4.8%	6.4%	4.6%	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana, January 19th–June 29th 2000*, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

There were states in which the number of notes on the PRI far exceeded those on the other two largest parties. The extreme cases were Chiapas, Yucatan, San Luis Potosi, Guerrero and Tabasco where the PRI doubled the number of notes for opposition. Only in Tlaxcala,

the AM coalition received more notes. The AC coalition obtained more notes in the capital, in Guanajuato and in Nuevo Leon. As for the time devoted to each party, the results again favour the PRI, who received 40 percent of the time, while the AC and AM coalitions obtained 27.8 and 20.2 percent respectively (Table 8.16).

Table 8.16
Time for Parties on Radio News Broadcasts in the Country, June 4th-June 29th 2000

	AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	PDS	Total
Total	582:01:42	836:34:35	423:20:37	78:10:44	100:01:44	70:54:49	2091:04:14
%	27.8%	40.0%	20.2%	3.7%	4.8%	3.4%	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana, January 19th-June 29th 2000*, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

If in the country, the outcome of the monitoring showed a favourable balance for the PRI, the situation in Mexico City was instead highly competed, mostly between the official party and AC (Table 8.16). Of the fourteen news broadcasts controlled by the IFE between 19th January and 29th June, eleven presented more notes on the AC candidate than on any other, and only in three news broadcasts (*Cupula Empresarial*, and the two editions of *Antena Radio*) did the PRI receiving more notes. On two news broadcasts, *Monitor de la Noche* and *Hora 7* the AM and the AC received more notes than the PRI.

Table 8.16
Number of Notes on Parties on Mexico City's Radio News Broadcasts, January 19th-
June 29th 2000

News Broadcasts*			AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	PDS	Total
Radio Stations	103.3 FM	Cúpula Empresarial (6:00-10:00)	858	976	577	92	139	79	2721
	1110 AM	Monitor de la Mañana (5:45-10:00)	301	241	216	42	69	51	920
		Monitor de la Tarde (13:00-15:15)	180	162	143	23	24	11	543
		Monitor de la Noche (17:00-21:00)	283	250	258	46	72	43	952
	1220 AM	Antena Radio (6:45-10:00)	372	436	298	116	152	108	1482
		Antena Radio (13:00-14:30)	181	191	156	34	48	29	639
	1260 AM	Panorama Detrás de la Noticia (6:00-10:00)	1238	1150	837	210	302	183	3920
	1500 AM	Eduardo Ruiz Healy y sus 40 Comentaristas (6:00- 9:30)	919	886	738	230	244	204	3221
	970 AM	José Cárdenas Informa (18:00-21:00)	833	738	528	146	196	160	2601
	IMAGEN FM 90.5	Imagen Informativa (6:50-11:00)	778	629	592	236	274	215	2724
		Imagen Informativa (13:00-15:00)	542	496	427	98	115	88	1766
	690 AM	Hora 7 (7:00-10:00)	25	19	20	8	21	11	104
	XHMM FM 100.1	Enfoque 1 ^a . Edición (6:00-9:00)	335	301	253	62	84	84	1119
	XHMVS Stereo Rey 102.5 FM	MVS 1a Edición (6:30-10:00)	501	427	384	46	86	68	1512
Total			7346	6902	5427	1389	1826	1334	24224

*All the news broadcasts listed here are transmitted from Monday to Friday.

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana, January 19th-June 29th 2000*, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

As for the time devoted to each party, of the fourteen news broadcasts being monitored, seven tried hard to maintain a fair balance between the three largest parties and coalitions (table 8.17). Of the other seven, only one favoured clearly the PRI (*Cupula Empresarial*). On the contrary, *Monitor* slightly favoured the AC coalition candidate in its evening edition. Cardenas, in spite of receiving less notes in *Monitor de la Noche* and the morning edition of *Imagen Informativa*, had more time devoted to him in these same news broadcasts. This does not mean that all of this information was necessarily positive for the AM candidate, especially in the case of *Monitor*.

Table 8.17
Percentage Time for Parties on Mexico City's Radio News Broadcasts, January 19th-
June 29th 2000

News Broadcasts*			AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	DS	Total
Radio Stations	103.3 FM	Cúpula Empresarial (6:00-10:00)	10.5%	14.0%	8.7%	4.1%	7.6%	5.9%	10.5%
	1110 AM	Monitor de la Mañana (5:45-10:00)	9.2%	6.3%	8.8%	2.2%	5.9%	2.5%	7.3%
		Monitor de la Tarde (13:00-15:15)	2.6%	1.9%	2.6%	1.4%	.9%	.7%	2.1%
		Monitor de la Noche (17:00-21:00)	4.7%	4.4%	6.6%	3.3%	3.3%	2.3%	4.7%
	1220 AM	Antena Radio (6:45-10:00)	6.9%	10.1%	7.8%	9.8%	8.9%	11.9%	8.7%
		Antena Radio 2ª Emisión (13:00-14:30)	3.3%	3.5%	3.6%	3.1%	2.8%	1.7%	3.3%
	1260 AM	Panorama Detrás de la Noticia (6:00-10:00)	10.8%	10.4%	10.0%	13.5%	11.5%	11.4%	10.7%
	1500 AM	Eduardo Ruiz Healy (6:00-9:30)	10.8%	10.3%	10.0%	10.5%	7.0%	7.7%	10.0%
	970 AM	José Cárdenas Informa (18:00-21:00)	13.2%	14.6%	11.1%	18.0%	16.9%	20.3%	14.1%
	IMAGEN FM 90.5	Imagen Informativa (6:50-11:00)	10.6%	8.1%	11.5%	15.9%	16.4%	18.0%	11.1%
		Imagen Informativa (13:00-15:00)	6.4%	6.2%	7.7%	7.7%	4.8%	4.5%	6.5%
	690 AM	Hora 7 (7:00-10:00)	.1%	.1%	.1%	.1%	1.1%	1.5%	.2%
	XHMM FM 100.1	Enfoque 1a. Edición (6:00-9:00)	4.9%	4.6%	5.6%	6.6%	7.1%	6.8%	5.3%
	XHMVS Stereo Rey 102.5 FM	MVS 1a Edición (06:30-10:00)	6.0%	5.4%	5.8%	3.9%	5.8%	4.8%	5.6%
Total			100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*All the news broadcasts listed here are transmitted from Monday to Friday.

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana, January 19th-June 29th 2000*, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

Now, as Table 8.18 shows, when considering the kind of notes presented on the parties at the national level, i.e. taking into account the radio news broadcasts nationwide, one can see that of the three most powerful competitors, the coalition that received the highest percentage of positive notes was the AM (3.4 percent), while both the PRI and AM

received the same amount of positive notes (3.1 percent). Again, it was the AM coalition who received the lowest percentage of negative notes (5.1 percent), leaving the AC coalition with the largest number of negative notes (10.9 percent).

Table 8.18
Positive, Negative and Neutral Notes on Parties in All Radio News Broadcasts,
January 19th-June 29th 2000

		AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	PDS	Total
TOTAL	Negative	10.9%	5.9%	5.1%	7.1%	7.0%	2.7%	7.2%
	Neutral	86.1%	90.9%	91.5%	92.2%	91.0%	90.1%	89.6%
	Positive	3.1%	3.1%	3.4%	.7%	2.0%	7.2%	3.2%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana*, January 19th-June 29th 2000, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

When comparing the figures of the country's news broadcasts with those of Mexico City's, in relation to the type of notes presented on the parties, it is interesting to note that though it was again the AM coalition who received fewer negative notes, this time it was the AC coalition who obtained the highest percentage of positive notes. In any case, the competition amongst the three largest political forces became more balanced in the ways in which the news broadcasts present information (Table 8.19). This time the percentage of negative notes for the AC coalition was not so far removed from the percentage received by both the PRI and the AM coalition. When compared with the nationwide results, the percentage of Mexico City's news broadcasts show that the presentation of negative notes diminishes in favour of neutral notes, since the percentage for positive notes remains in both cases relatively similar.

Table 8.19
Positive, Negative and Neutral Notes on Parties on Mexico City's Radio News
Broadcasts, January 19th-June 29th 2000

		AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	PDS	Total
Mexico City	Negative	8.6%	6.5%	5.9%	4.5%	4.8%	2.3%	6.5%
	Neutral	88.2%	91.4%	91.3%	95.0%	94.4%	92.5%	90.9%
	Positive	3.2%	2.0%	2.7%	0.4%	0.9%	5.2%	2.5%
	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana*, January 19th-June 29th 2000, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

Finally, as for the kind of notes presented on the parties in the different news broadcasts, it is interesting to note that though on Tables 8.14 and 8.15 the news broadcast *Cúpula Empresarial* devoted more notes and time to the PRI, most of such notes were neutral (Table 8.20). The same can be said about AM on both *Monitor de la Noche* and *Hora 7*, where most of the notes presented on that coalition resulted as being neutral.

Moreover, only four out of all of the fourteen news broadcasts being monitored presented less than 90 percent of impartial notes: *José Cárdenas Informa*, 84.7%, *Eduardo Ruiz Healy*, 85.7%, *Monitor de la Tarde*, 86.9%, and *Panorama Detrás de la Noticia*, 88.5%. However, when impartiality was violated, it was usually done by presenting a negative note instead of a positive comment, and this was more or less the case for all the parties.

The news broadcasts that presented more positive notes on the PRI were *Monitor de la Tarde* (8.0%), *monitor de la Mañana* (2.9%), *Antena Radio* (2.8%), and *José Cárdenas Informa* (2.8%). The news broadcasts who presented the largest number of negative notes on that party in their transmissions were: *Eduardo Ruiz Healy*, 14.2%, *Monitor de la Tarde*, 13%, *José Cárdenas Informa*, 10.8% and *Panorama Detrás de la Noticia*, 7.5%.

The news broadcasts that presented more positive notes on the AC coalition were: *Monitor de la Tarde*, 6.1%, *Eduardo Ruiz Healy*, 5.1%, *José Cárdenas Informa*, 4.8%, and *Panorama Detrás de la Noticia*, 4.8%. Those who presented more negative notes on AC were: *José Cárdenas Informa*, 13.8%, *Panorama Detrás de la Noticia*, 12.1%, *Cúpula Empresarial*, 11.5%, *Antena Radio*, 10.2%, *Eduardo Ruiz Healy*, 9.6%, and *Monitor de la Tarde*, 9.4%. Those who presented the largest percentage of positive notes on the AM coalition were: *Panorama Detrás de la Noticia*, 6.5%, *José Cárdenas Informa*, 5.3%, and *Eduardo Ruiz Healy*, 2.8%. Those who presented more negative notes on AM were: *Eduardo Ruiz Healy*, 14.2%, *José Cárdenas Informa*, 10.2%, and *Panorama Detrás de la Noticia*, 5.1%.

As one may see, the news broadcasts that tended to be more critical were doing so to all of the three largest political forces, and this is a very important feature of the forms in which political information was presented during the 2000 campaign.

Table 8.20
Positive, Negative and Neutral Notes on Parties on the Different Radio News
Broadcasts in Mexico City, January 19th-June 29th 2000

Newsbroadcasts*			AC	PRI	AM	PCD	PARM	DS	Total
103.3 FM	Cúpula Empresarial (6:00-10:00)	Negative	11.5%	3.8%	5.0%	5.4%	6.5%	3.8%	6.7%
		Neutral	87.1%	94.0%	91.9%	94.6%	92.8%	87.3%	91.1%
		Positive	1.4%	2.3%	3.1%	.0%	.7%	8.9%	2.2%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
1110 AM	Monitor de la Mañana (5:45-10:00)	Negative	6.0%	4.6%	4.6%	7.1%	8.7%	2.0%	5.3%
		Neutral	90.0%	92.5%	93.5%	90.5%	88.4%	82.4%	91.0%
		Positive	4.0%	2.9%	1.9%	2.4%	2.9%	15.7%	3.7%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Monitor de la Tarde (13:00-15:15)	Negative	9.4%	13.0%	4.2%	4.3%	.0%	.0%	8.3%
		Neutral	84.4%	79.0%	95.1%	95.7%	100%	90.9%	86.9%
		Positive	6.1%	8.0%	.7%	.0%	.0%	9.1%	4.8%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Monitor de la Noche (17:00-21:00)	Negative	5.7%	5.2%	3.9%	4.3%	2.8%	2.3%	4.6%
		Neutral	91.2%	94.8%	96.1%	95.7%	97.2%	86.0%	93.9%
		Positive	3.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	11.6%	1.5%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
1220 AM	Antena Radio (6:45-10:00)	Negative	10.2%	3.4%	3.4%	7.8%	3.9%	1.9%	5.4%
		Neutral	88.7%	93.8%	95.6%	92.2%	94.1%	88.0%	92.4%
		Positive	1.1%	2.8%	1.0%	.0%	2.0%	10.2%	2.2%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Antena Radio 2 ^a Emisión (13:00-14:30)	Negative	5.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.4%
		Neutral	94.5%	99.5%	99.4%	100%	100%	96.6%	98.0%
		Positive	.6%	.5%	.6%	.0%	.0%	3.4%	.6%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
1260 AM	Panorama Detrás de la Noticia (6:00-10:00)	Negative	12.1%	7.5%	5.1%	5.2%	4.0%	2.7%	7.8%
		Neutral	83.0%	90.7%	88.4%	94.8%	96.0%	92.9%	88.5%
		Positive	4.8%	1.8%	6.5%	.0%	.0%	4.4%	3.6%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
1500 AM	Eduardo Ruiz Healy (6:00-9:30)	Negative	9.6%	14.2%	14.2%	7.8%	7.0%	5.9%	11.4%
		Neutral	85.3%	83.3%	82.9%	92.2%	92.6%	93.1%	85.7%
		Positive	5.1%	2.5%	2.8%	.0%	.4%	1.0%	2.9%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
970 AM	José Cárdenas Informa (18:00-21:00)	Negative	13.8%	10.8%	10.2%	6.2%	12.2%	3.1%	11.0%
		Neutral	81.4%	86.3%	84.5%	92.5%	83.7%	90.0%	84.7%
		Positive	4.8%	2.8%	5.3%	1.4%	4.1%	6.9%	4.2%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Continues

IMAGEN FM 90.5	Imagen Informativa (6:50-11:00)	Negative	3.6%	3.5%	4.7%	1.3%	2.2%	.5%	3.2%
		Neutral	95.4%	96.0%	94.1%	98.3%	97.4%	95.8%	95.7%
		Positive	1.0%	.5%	1.2%	.4%	.4%	3.7%	1.0%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Imagen Informativa (13:00-15:00)	Negative	1.8%	1.8%	.7%	.0%	1.7%	.0%	1.4%
		Neutral	96.5%	97.4%	98.6%	99.0%	98.3%	100%	97.7%
		Positive	1.7%	.8%	.7%	1.0%	.0%	.0%	1.0%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
690 AM	Hora 7 (7:00- 10:00)	Negative	4.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.0%
		Neutral	96.0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.0%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
XHMM FM 100.1	Enfoque 1a. Edición (6:00- 9:00)	Negative	6.9%	5.3%	4.7%	.0%	2.4%	.0%	4.7%
		Neutral	92.2%	93.4%	94.1%	100%	97.6%	98.8%	94.3%
		Positive	.9%	1.3%	1.2%	.0%	.0%	1.2%	1.0%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
XHMVS Stereo Rey 102.5 FM	MVS 1a Edición (06:30-10:00)	Negative	3.4%	3.7%	3.1%	4.3%	1.2%	1.5%	3.2%
		Neutral	92.2%	94.1%	95.6%	93.5%	98.8%	89.7%	93.9%
		Positive	4.4%	2.1%	1.3%	2.2%	.0%	8.8%	2.8%
		Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*All the news broadcasts listed here are transmitted from Monday to Friday.

Source: Elaborated with data from IFE, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana, January 19th-June 29th 2000*, IFE, Mexico City, CD-Rom.

The information presented on the radio news broadcasts during the 2000 electoral campaigns was quite impartial and certainly the most non-biased in Mexican history. Whenever the newsreaders added any kind of remark or comment on the news presented they usually criticised and were seldom supportive of the parties or candidates. And this was more or less the same for the three largest parties. Only on rare occasions would the different candidates complain about the “unfair coverage” given on the media, and when this occurred the complaints were shared by all. In the case of the news broadcasts of Mexico City’s and other urban areas a big difference with some rural states, like Chiapas and Tabasco (where the dominant interests on radio linked to the old regime), was immediately apparent. This raised again the old question on the effects of the media, since, as Table 8.21 show, there seems to be an almost inverse correlation between the time devoted on the country’s news broadcasts to the two main competitors and the final voting they obtained. On this subject a deeper study is required.

Table 8.21
Time on News Broadcasts in all the Country as Compared to Voting for PRI, AC and AM

Party	Time	Voting
PRI	40.0 percent	36.10 percent
AC	27.8 percent	42.52 percent
AM	20.2 percent	16.64 percent

Source: elaborated with data from IFE.

What can be seen in this chapter is the emergence of a more independent radio industry – more the case in urban modern Mexico, than in rural areas—that, though still fighting with important problems in certain regions to consolidate its autonomy, has overcome with relative success the challenge posed by the 2000 electoral process. In the case of big national radio networks, usually transmitting from Mexico City, this period helped to anchor them to more independent positions from which they now transmit and comment on the news and other information. However, in the case of small local radio stations, it is necessary make an important remark. Though in certain areas the influence of old-guard politicians and *caciques* on the local stations is very important, the most relevant challenge for them now comes from local Mafia and drug dealing cartels that have their bases in those regions –like Sinaloa, Nayarit, Guerrero, the mountains of Jalisco, and Colima. Every year some local journalists, mostly from the printed press and local radio stations, are murdered by these cartels, which have transformed into the main obstacle for consolidating a free radio in those regions. In this way, despite the fact that during the period 1994-2000 there appeared to be the conditions and incentives for the radio entrepreneurs to move towards more independent and autonomous positions in the ways in which they presented information, and news on politics, helping to consolidate an open national radio industry, new challenges also emerged for local radio stations in certain provinces, making the search for independence a task still to be completed.

Final Remarks

Mass Media and Democracy in Mexico

After decades of under-reporting on public life, in recent years the broadcast media seem to have pushed the pendulum to the opposite side, presenting information and news on politics with fairness and balance. If for decades, the news broadcasts transmitted generally a supportive image of the regime, a daily report on the President's agenda, and avoided all relevant debates on public matters, during the last 15 years they have opened spaces also to opposition parties and organisations. The most notorious example of this broadcast media openness are the coverage and the reports they did on, (and during), the 1997 and 2000 electoral campaigns. What were the incentives or the conditions for this media to open their transmissions to alternative political expressions?

As has been discussed, political pluralism in Mexico started long before the broadcast media began to report on it. There is no coincidence in time between the growing political pluralism and the openness of these media. For years broadcast media, especially TV, were reluctant to discuss pluralism, so that even though the political transition was well under way, it was not reflected in this media. This "silence" of the broadcast media has its roots in the fact that since the beginning, the Mexican post-revolutionary regime offered the media entrepreneurs different kinds of direct and indirect benefits, from technological support to tax exemptions so that they could consolidate and develop an economically strong radio and TV industry. Moreover, these entrepreneurs established a Chamber for the Radio and Television Industries (CIRT) that successfully pressed on the state for legal and statutory modifications on economic matters. The trade-off for such economic advantages were usually political. Usually, the same regulations and laws that granted these media the economic benefits (the LEC of 1926, the LGVCs of 1937-41, the LFRT of 1960 and the RLFRT of 1973), also established different mechanisms and means for the regime to secure the ultimate control over the content of the transmissions. However, as can be seen through the kind of information these media presented on their news broadcasts and the constant declarations of their executives and representatives in the CIRT, they were always willing to collaborate and support a regime that granted them so many economic benefits (Chapters

1, 2 and 4). In the decades prior to the 1980s no station was interested in “trespassing the limits of tolerance”, also because it must be taken into account that in general economic growth had created little pressure for democratisation. The beneficial conditions granted to these media combined for decades with a lack of pressure from society for democratisation in order to dis-incentivate them from presenting the few and scattered opposition voices. In this way, though the regime counted on several means for securing the exclusiveness of “its version” of reality, the silence of the media was a product of a mutual beneficial exchange of economic and fiscal benefits for political support. Self-censorship was the rule and the political control over the contents was always used as a last resort for the regime to secure the media’s support.

However, in the last fifteen years a clear openness can be noticed in the ways the media presents and discusses politics. Undoubtedly, important changes developed at the political level for permitting the broadcast media to present other political voices. But as analysed in Chapters 5, 7 and 8, it was not this political transformation (i.e. the transition), that triggered the “informational *abertura*” of these media. The elections of 1988, with fierce competition amongst the different political parties and almost exclusive media coverage in favour of the PRI is the best example. The timing of the political transition was not coincident with the media’s openness, except at its very last moments, and it is possible to affirm that the transition was a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for that openness. If then it was not caused by the transition, what were the conditions that favoured that openness?

During the 1980s and early 1990s –a period of increasing political plurality—there were some important Electoral Reforms. These reforms granted the parties better conditions for competing and in accessing the media and transmitting their messages, but they were not effective for generating more impartial, balanced and fair transmissions within these media.¹ The key for understanding the broadcast media’s openness is to be found in the alteration of the economic conditions in which they traditionally developed. The economic situation in which the media had to play in the 1980s and 1990s was not one of stability and growth, as it had been for decades, but one of recurrent crises and growing competition.

¹ For example, since 1994, the IFE was granted the capacity to monitor the ways the broadcast media present information related to the campaigns. In spite of that faculty and of its capacity to make public its findings, it was not able to grant a balanced and fair treatment of political information.

These changes, at an economic level, generated incentives for the entrepreneurs, first on radio (Chapters 5 and 8) and much later on TV (Chapter 7), to "trespass the limits of what it was permitted to say". Economic crises and competition for audiences and resources caused radio and TV to turn to the already existing political pluralism in order to make it a profitable business. Democracy became a good business, and good businesses suddenly supported democracy. Therefore a first general conclusion is that *the openness of radio and television was led not by the rhythms of the political transition, but by the economic and corporate interests of the licensees (i.e. the concessionaires)*.

However, as Chapters 7 and 8 show, there are interesting differences between radio and television in their timing for the "informational *abertura*". In the case of radio, the *abertura* is rooted in two important changes that occurred during the 1980s: **on the one hand**, the wider adoption of innovative forms of broadcasting based on talk-radio formats, and the positive reaction of the audiences. After being the most important frequency in Mexico, AM stations started to fall dramatically in the audiences' preferences due to the growing success of FM for music broadcasting. Still in 1980 audiences in Mexico City were listening to AM by a ratio of almost 4 to 1 over FM radio (77% against 23%). However by 1985, only five years later, these preferences had almost reversed: 35.1% still preferred AM, while 64.9% preferred FM. The success of FM stations has to do firstly with the better sound quality of their broadcastings which eventually displaced AM from the people's preferences in the transmission of *music*, which at that time composed by far the largest category of programmes on all radio stations in the country. Another reason related to the technological advances that not only reduced the costs of double-band radio sets, but also created a new generation of gadgets like the "Walkman", new car stereos, and more sophisticated home radio sets which helped to make FM radio popular and accessible.

Without the technical capacity for competing in music broadcasting, AM stations opted for the introduction of other sorts of programming, mainly composed of talk-radio broadcasts that did not require the sound quality expected from music programming. Most of these talk-radio programmes consisted of discussions on various topics ranging from housekeeping to football, and in some of them the phone lines were open to the audiences to call up and participate. In a country with a very low level of readership and at a time when television was not subject to any alternative voice or to any sort of audience

participation, people responded with enthusiasm to these new options. People wanted to have media in which they could feel they were listened to and on which they could have a voice. These transmissions proved to be widely accepted and by 1990 AM stations had recovered 44.5 percent of the audiences in Mexico City.

There is one crucial aspect related to the success of talk-radio: higher tariff rates for commercial adverts. As Chapters 4 and 7 show, the stations charged an additional 30 to 50 percent tariff for inserting commercial breaks during those programmes. Talk-radio was soon adopted by news broadcasters as well, leaving behind the old format of reading the news without comments and editorials. The first news broadcasters that adopted talk-radio formats was *Monitor*, and by the late 1980s the most important news broadcasts in Mexico City had followed its example.

On the other hand, these initial changes in the *formats* were progressively reflecting on the *contents* as well. This has to do mostly with the growing competition amongst an increasing number of radio stations. In a relatively stagnant publicity market, radio stations had to imagine more attractive forms of broadcasting and radio programming. The economic crisis reduced radio's share in the publicity market. If during the second half of the 1970s, radio's and TV's share of the publicity market was of 15 and 62 percent respectively, in the late 1990s radio's share reduced to 9.5 percent while that of TV grew to 75 percent (Chapters Five and Eight).

This shrink in radio's share coincided with an important increase in the number of licenses. (federal concessions) awarded to operate more stations. From 1970 to 1985 the number of commercial stations increased from 579 to 839 stations, but it grew to 1135 stations in 1995. Thus the publicity market reduced at a time when the number of stations increased, and this obliged the stations to compete and adopt more attractive formats, (the talk-radio ones), for producing radio shows. Talk-radio was soon adopted by the news broadcasts, and FM stations soon inaugurated their own news transmissions as well. In 1995, in Mexico City alone there were more than 25 radio news broadcasts transmitting everyday. These programmes charged the highest rates for commercial adverts.

In this race amongst stations and networks to increase their audiences and ratings, innovative changes and strategies were adopted. Stations affiliated to networks, and networks created business alliances in order to offer their clientele better publicity

“packages”, widen their markets, and reduce operation costs. Other actions taken by the stations were the dismissal of employees and the replacing of not-so-profitable programming with more profitable options. In the case of news broadcasts, many stations hired professional and, at times controversial, journalists as newscasters, and this consolidated the talk-radio on these programmes. Competition led also to the eventual trespassing of the limits of tolerance of the regime. In other words, the strong competition created incentives for some stations to explore the terrain opened by the growing political plurality and to provide for the people’s need for information on matters that television did not discuss. This attempt at opening the microphones usually met with the regime’s direct intervention and censorship. Censorship ranged from “friendly” recommendations to modify the formats, to threat to use every legal means for controlling the stations, to explicit demands for the replacement of critical newscasters. A common tactic was to call the stations from different governmental offices –mostly the General Direction of Radio, Television and Cinematography of the Secretariat of *Gobernación*, and from the Office of the Presidency—to protest against certain comments or opinions expressed on air by the newscasters or their guests. Of course every call implied a threat that might even go as far as to cancel the license (concession).

The reaction of the radio concessionaires before those threats was normally the removal of the newscasters. Since having renowned and relatively controversial journalists as newscasters helped to keep the ratings high and the credibility of the news broadcasts, there was a notable level of mobility among the journalists from one station to another. From the 1980s to the early 1990s some radio stations took the first steps towards presenting political information in more open ways (presenting the points of view of other parties and allotting air-time to alternative voices), though such cases were still not the rule and the regime’s pressure was heavy. In spite of such pressure, some radio stations were willing to explore the limits of tolerance, since such a policy in their news broadcasts became crucial for their credibility and therefore their survival in an increasingly competitive market.

If radio news broadcasts were already showing signs of openness in the early 1990s in spite of the government’s pressure, television had no incentive until very recently for presenting alternative information and pluralism on its screens. As discussed in Chapter 4, between the 1970s and the early 1990s, Televisa’s news broadcasts consolidated as regime’s virtual

public relations agencies in which official points of view on domestic politics were presented—with a special emphasis on the president's daily agenda.

In the 1980s, when opposition movements began to grow stronger and became more important, some small and medium entrepreneurs mostly in the Northern cities of Mexico started to sympathise with and affiliate to the centre-right wing PAN. However, the strongest entrepreneurs and the largest consortiums—among which Televisa ranked at the top—never needed to turn towards opposition, since President De la Madrid was a decided promoter of their interests. In the 1980s, even the old nationalist and populist discourse was replaced by another more akin to their interests. Therefore, despite the fact that the political liberalisation process was creating new political alternatives, the strongest entrepreneurs decided to remain on the side of the government and maintain—and increase—their benefits. Televisa was no exception.

Televisa's support can be assessed in the way it presented political information, especially during electoral periods when important political opposition movements and parties became a relative challenge to the PRI regime. In spite of the political relevance of those opposition forces, the company's information policy sought to downgrade them. During the 1980s, the regime gave Televisa privileged treatment that helped the company to become as the largest Spanish-language media corporation in the world. Chapter 4 focuses precisely on analysing and discussing these mutually beneficial arrangements.

However, by the second half of the 1990s an important change in the ways television reported on political information was registered. In sharp contrast with what had been its traditionally biased handling of political information, after 1996 private television began to play a crucial role as a more independent source of political information. These changes were noticeable, both during the campaigns of 1997, and the electoral race of 2000, when the information presented on the TV screens was not biased in favour of the PRI and its candidates, but was actually quite impartial.

As is explained in Chapter Seven, the reasons for such openness have to do, firstly, with the emergence of a competition scheme that seriously altered the conditions of the quasi-monopoly in which Mexican private TV had developed for decades. In 1992 a new private terrestrial TV network emerged out of the privatisation of the public TV network Imevision. The network was renamed TV Azteca and it eventually became a true

competitor against Televisa. As analysed in Chapter 7, by 1995-6 competition was developing its most fierce aspects. Competition forced both networks to implement new investment and publicity policies, and to seek new alliances to strengthen their positions and raise the ratings.

Immediately after the acquisition of the public TV network, its major shareholder and chairman, Ricardo Salinas Pliego, invested more than US \$ 20 million in expanding the transmission capacity of his two channels, Channel 13 and Channel 7, in order to transform them into national networks. He also announced a very aggressive policy directed at increasing its audiences and eventually producing their own programming at top rating times, (between 19:30 and 22:30). TV Azteca also incorporated local programming in the states and expanded into the American and Latin American markets. The value of the network increased from US \$ 645 million, (the amount paid by Salinas Pliego in 1992), to US \$ 2.4 billion in 1997.

In 1996 the competition among the TV networks became so aggressive that the press called it "the war of the TV". An independent study revealed that by mid-1996 TV Azteca's news broadcast, *Hechos*, was 23 percent ahead in the audience preferences than Televisa's *24 Horas*. In any case, the strong competition for the publicity market showed that during 1997 Televisa's share of commercial publicity diminished 14.9 percent, while that of TV Azteca rose to 18.5 percent. This competition—that almost became a zero-sum game—pushed Televisa's executives to implement deep internal changes, ranging from the symbolic, (the traditional logo of the corporation was renewed), to the structural. The new chairman of Televisa, Emilio Azcarraga Jean, who assumed the post after his father's death in April 1997, seemed to be more concerned with the economic and the financial success of the firm than of preserving old political loyalties. A new Executive Committee was created in order to strengthen the direction of the corporation through a more professional and specialised style, instead of relying on the chairman's leadership, (as was the case during the times of Emilio Azcarraga Vidaurreta). The new policies emphasised efficiency and therefore Televisa sold its shares in a large number of "non-strategic businesses", i.e. those that did not concentrate on TV production. At the same time Azcárraga Jean declared that "the openness in the Mexican political system required to be mirrored in the openness of

the presentation of news and information”.² Shortly afterwards, the oldest TV news broadcast, *24 Horas*, transmitted its last programme after 27 years of uninterrupted broadcasting. The intention of the young Azcárraga Jean, as clearly stated in an interview, was to break with the past that strongly linked Televisa to the old regime.³ However, all these changes on TV were accelerated by the opportunities created by the 1996 Electoral Law for doing good business with the parties.

A **second** reason for openness on the TV screens was the passing of a new electoral legislation, the Reform of 1996, that granted the political parties the largest amount of resources ever for investing in political advertising, a business neither network wanted to be kept away from –especially in the middle of their “war”. The issuing of a new electoral reform in 1996 not only reiterated the recommendations of 1994 on the ways these types of media should present information on the campaigns, and implemented new mechanisms for monitoring that information, but most decisively the Reform of 1996 provided the political parties with more air-time on television and the largest amount of resources ever to be spent on commercial spots and ads. It was obvious that neither Televisa nor TV Azteca wanted to be distanced from the big cake that the electoral resources represented.

In brief, the openness of radio and television was led by the economic interests of the media moved by increasing competition among the stations. It was precisely these incentives which led the media towards presenting more equilibrated and impartial information on the different political figures and forces in competition. They took advantage of the new political conditions for presenting information in a more attractive manner in order to raise the ratings and increase their shares in the publicity market. In a moment of crisis and increasing competition for resources and audiences, the media decided to “test the limits of what was permitted to say”, and thus made of the growing political pluralism, a profitable business for themselves. The 1996 Electoral Reform marked, in this sense, a definitive incentive for presenting more balanced and impartial information. All these changes were reflected during the political campaigns of 1997 and 2000, and more markedly during the electoral journey, making the broadcasting media, but especially the TV screens become a crucial factor for maintaining the legitimacy and stability of the whole *momentum* especially when President Zedillo on July 6th 2000 at 8:00 p.m. (when the voting count was

² *The Miami Herald*, November 9th 1997.

not finished, but when the PAN had, statistically, an insurmountable advantage) recognised the defeat of his party in their bid for the presidency.⁴

However, in spite of all these advances, the broadcast media in Mexico still have a long way to go before becoming more reliable and permanent bulwarks of the democratisation process. There is a dominant conception of the media in democratic polities that derives from the classical liberal tradition.⁵ Though both his father, James Mill, and Jeremy Bentham wrote about the freedom of the press,⁶ it was John Stuart Mill who, in the mid-XIX Century, brilliantly synthesised the core of the liberal positions concerning the importance of such freedom.⁷ Though more than 150 years have passed since then, his examination of these topics have provided essential arguments for the liberal theories that advocate the freedom of the mass media in contemporary societies. For J.S. Mill, freedom of the press was required in order to maintain a space where a free exchange of ideas and debates could eventually lead individuals to find the "truth" (in terms of the most rational argument in a public debate that would discard false ideas),⁸ to avoid the tyranny of the overwhelmingly dominant opinion of those who dissent from it, (thus protecting individualism),⁹ and to create a bulwark "against corrupt or tyrannical government".¹⁰

³ *Reforma*, March 21st 1998.

⁴ For an account of the 6th July 2000 electoral journey on TV screens see Manuel Alejandro Guerrero, "Los medios de comunicación y los nuevos retos democráticos en México", on the journalistic web site www.pulso.org/Espanol/Archivo/index.htm For an account of the behaviour of the radio news broadcasts that day see Fernando Mejía Barquera, "Nuevo escenario radiofónico", in *Etcétera*, México City, no.388, July 7th 2000.

⁵ It is possible to situate the origins of this tradition in the modern liberal defense of the freedom of speech and of the press (that both rapidly became associated, and even equivalent with one another) in XVII Century's England. Milton's *Aeropagitica* (1644) bravely defended the liberties of unlicensed printing and attacked censorship in the name of God and virtue. In the XVIII Century the Whigs adopted the "liberty of the press" as one of their most favoured topics in the name of the natural right of man to express freely and, thereby, securing the good functioning of the government under the rule of law. Representative writings on this tradition are Matthew Tindal's *Reasons Against Restraining the Press* (1704) and Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791-1792). For a more detailed account on the struggles for the liberty of the press in this century see Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century*, Philadelphia, 1987.

⁶ By the close of that century and the beginning of the XIX Century, the liberal theories of the press nurtured from Utilitarian viewpoints. The idea that good government --the one which produces the greatest happiness for the largest number of individuals-- is fostered by open and public discussion and the liberty of the press are reflected in both James Mill's *Liberty of the Press* (1811) and Bentham's *On the Liberty of the Press and Public Discussion* (1820-21).

⁷ John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty" (1859), in J.S. Mill, *On Liberty and Other Writings*, edited by Stefan Collini, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989. See especially his second chapter "On the liberty of thought and discussion" and his third chapter "Of individuality, as one of the elements of the well-being".

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.23.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pgs. 8-9.

This liberal account of the media became increasingly identified with democracy --with the liberal capitalist democracies that formed in Western societies throughout the XIX and XX Centuries. The mass media are conceived of as a sort of "fourth estate" in the public surveillance of the exercise of power. In this sense, "States are dragged before the court of public opinion. In the name of the common or public interest, the press chides tyrants and malefactors who stifle or evade public opinion. The abuse of political power is exposed publicly".¹¹ The media are essential to protect citizens' civil and political rights and to permit accountability in the political decision-making process, which would otherwise be "naturally" surrounded by secrecy.

The media are also seen as an open arena for public and rational deliberation in liberal democratic polities, through which the society and the government can maintain constant communication, and through which the former also exercises an informal control over the latter. The notions behind this assumption are that the mass media are neutral and essentially reflect a potent, constant and contrasting public debate amongst citizens about public affairs, which is free, rational and open in principle to all citizens who want to express their ideas. This freedom of discussion benefits the public interest, since it is assumed that the most significant points of view are being presented for discussion, and also that an immense amount of information will be made available for the individuals.¹²

In brief, the mass media, according to the liberal tradition are conceived of as institutions that, if they are democratic, must:

- Watch over the uses of power on behalf of the citizens.
- Provide them with information on which they may base their choices, opinions and decisions on public matters.
- Become themselves an open and free marketplace of ideas in which all citizens can participate and where there are no guaranteed *a priori* predominant points of view, but only the results of a permanent rational debate and contrasting of arguments.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.19.

¹¹ John Keane, *The Media and Democracy*, London, Polity Press, 1991, pgs.21-22.

¹² David Kelley and Roger Donway, "Liberalism and free speech", in Judith Lichtenberg (ed.), *Democracy and the Mass Media*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pgs.89-91.

In Mexico, though the forms in which the broadcasting media have presented information since the 1997 electoral campaigns marks a dramatic difference with the traditional bias in favour of the PRI, there is still a long way to go before creating a structurally independent media regime. Practices and attitudes on informing and reporting on politics have changed, but the norms and legislation that rules the broadcast media are still rooted in the past.

Increasingly, impartiality and balance seem to be finding their places as dominant values in reporting on political campaigns, and during non-electoral periods the broadcast media take pains to present plural and relatively well balanced information. However, there is still much to do, since the whole media regime —laws, regulations, practices, low professionalism, etc.—in which they are inserted is still rooted in an authoritarian framework. For instance, the Federal Law on Radio and Television (LFRT) of 1960 and the Regulation of 1973 (RLFRT) still form the legal precepts within which the broadcasting media have to develop, and as previously discussed, they contain a large number of legal dispositions that explicitly attempt to restrain the freedom of the broadcasting media. Article LFRT 9 gives the Secretariat of Communications and Transports the faculty to allocate licenses at its own “free will”. Article LFRT 31-IX gives that same secretariat the capacity to revoke them also by “unfulfilling any other condition *non specified on any previous fraction*” (i.e. for any possible reason the authority may present). Article RLFRT 10 gives the Secretariat of *Gobernación* an enormous amount of power to revise programming and censor if necessary.¹³ The lack of proper regulations, amongst other things, make these media vulnerable to the eventual caprices of the authorities and open the possibility of pressures and collusion among stations and politicians. For the Mexican broadcast media to consolidate a structurally independent media regime, at least three conditions must be met:¹⁴

- The existence of proper mechanisms that secure the right to obtain public information.
- An adequate media legislation that grants their independence from the state.

¹³ See Chapter Two.

¹⁴ Additionally, there must exist a relatively demanding civil society in matters of information and media. This topic alone requires another thesis, and thus, I would only like to point out that though during the last decade participation has increased in Mexico in terms of voting, taking part in demonstrations and movements, this is not necessarily translated into a strong and demanding civil society in terms of information. The low level of readership, the difficulties in accessing the public records, and in general the low level of education of the population, constitute some of the most important obstacles for generating a civil

- Higher professionalism of journalists.

As to the first two points, though it is clear that they deal with different problems (one with the obligation of the state to provide information and the other with the creation of a legal framework for securing the media's independence in matters of license awarding, operation and contents controls), in Mexico for decades they have been considered as one and the same discussion, generating great confusion on these two subjects. It was not until the issuing of the *Basic Plan of Government, 1976-1982* of the PRI presidential candidate, López Portillo, in 1975 when –in a typical example of the candidate's populist revolutionary tone—it was firstly established that “the Right to Access Public Information is a means for liberating individuals, not for preserving the exploitation of alienated consciousness with lucrative or power ends (*El Derecho a la Información es un instrumento de liberación y no de explotación de conciencias alienadas con fines lucrativos y de poder*)”.¹⁵ It also states that the right to access public information is the counterpart of the freedom of speech and expression. In 1976, as part of the discussion about the political reform that López Portillo was promoting, it was proposed that a last sentence should be added to Article 6 of the Constitution,¹⁶ stating that “the right to access information will be granted by the state”. This reform was passed at the end of 1977 along with other changes to the electoral law as part of the Reform of 1977.

There immediately began a great debate on what should be the measures taken by the State to grant it. Since the beginning, the discussions emphasised not the obligations of the State to provide public information, or to open the public records –which is actually the essence of any law on the right to accessing information–, but the possibility of elaborating a new Broadcasting Law that could replace the LFRT of 1960. Obviously, for the media entrepreneurs, the discussion of such a law was considered to be part of a wider effort of the government to tighten its controls over the private mass media, as occurred in 1969 and

society that not only demands the public accountability of its government and votes (as is happening now), but that also claims better information and presses for better broadcasting quality.

¹⁵ *Plan Basico de Gobierno, 1976-1982*, Partido Revolucionario Institucional, VIII Asamblea Nacional Ordinaria, 25 de septiembre de 1975, Ed. PRI, pgs.10-12.

¹⁶ The original Article 6 of 1917 said: “the manifestation of the ideas will not be subject of judicial or administrative inquisition, but only in those cases in which it constitutes an attack on morals, third parties' rights, or in which it provokes a misdemeanour or disturbs the public peace”.

1973.¹⁷ In October 1978, during the Broadcasting Week, the Secretary of *Gobernación*, Jesús Reyes Heróles, explained before the licensees that a regulatory law would also contemplate some changes on the actual media legislation in order to modify the open mercantilist and commercial conception of the broadcasting media, and to foster a larger plurality in those media.¹⁸ Any debate on the obligation of the State to provide information to the citizens was avoided, leaving the emphasis on the possible modifications to the LFRT. Therefore, all attempts to discuss an "information law" has been taken to mean neither the openness of the state's records nor its obligation to provide public information, but tighter controls over the broadcasters, thus confusing both issues.

As could be expected, the private licensees strongly opposed any further change in the broadcasting legislation. For many of them, the discussion on the right to information was only a pretext to further tightening of the political control in the industry. At the end, López Portillo's administration never sent any reform bill and Luis M. Farías, the *Priista* leader of the Chamber of Deputies and a major licensee himself, convoked at the beginning of 1979 a number of public audiences in the name of the Federal Electoral Commission to discuss a possible reform bill. Twenty public audiences were held between 21st February and 6th August 1980 with the participation of members of industry and unions, academics and government officials. However, nothing concrete was achieved by them and the discussion was simply postponed,¹⁹ in spite of the fact that in the same year the Senate ratified the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights, signed in 1966, and the OAS Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, signed in 1969, both containing precepts related to the obligation of the state to grant the right to accessing public information.

In 1983 a new attempt was made to discuss the right to information along with a bill on social communication. More audiences were organised and, once again, in spite of the enthusiasm of academics, politicians, and some licensees that participated, the outcome was

¹⁷ See Chapter Two.

¹⁸ In Fernandez Christlieb (1996), pgs. 255 and 263.

¹⁹ For Deputy Farías the right to information might cause its manipulation and endanger all freedom of expression. For him, it was better not to produce more rules and laws stated in relation to defining an adequate right to information that the situation was as complex as "making a circle from a square" (*UnomasUno*, May 29th 1981).

the same as in 1980-1: much ado about nothing.²⁰ After these events no more serious debates were held on matters of information until the late 1990s.

On April 22nd 1997, the PAN, the PRD and the PT presented a bill on social communication that was immediately rejected by the PRI, the Executive and the concessionaires alike. Again, confusion was the most defining characteristic of the debates. This time, for the Executive and the PRI, such bill was an attempt to restrict the freedom of speech of the media by creating more regulations and controls over broadcastings. In 1997, on the Day of the Freedom of the Press, (June 7th), President Zedillo remarked that "in Mexico, any reform bill that seeks to regulate on the media, directly challenges the freedom of speech".²¹ In this way, the regime's officials avoided the true meaning of such a bill: the obligation of the State to provide information to the citizens and to open the public records.²² Naturally, the concessionaires supported the president's position and again opposed to the parties' bill.

However, the debate on the social communication bill and the reform of the 1960 LFRT was renewed after the 1997 elections, when the Deputies' Commission of Radio, Television and Cinema was chaired by PAN's Deputy Javier Corral. In relation to the reform to the LFRT, Corral proposed:

- a) To eliminate the highly discretionary procedures of the Executive for awarding and revoking the concessions on radio and television.

²⁰ More than one thousand conference papers were presented in more than ten states in Mexico. Most of such conferences were published by the Presidency as *Foros de Consulta Popular* in 1983 in ten volumes.

²¹ *La Jornada*, June 8th 1997.

²² In Mexico, it is extremely difficult to find any kind of important public information. Since no law obliges the State to provide information to society, the forms in which the journalists and the media have obtained such information has been through their "good" relations with the government officials, and usually this has been part of the "informal arrangements" between the media and the government. However, for everybody else the task of obtaining information from the government about, for instance the forms in which the budgets are spent, or about current programmes and policies implemented, is very much an impossible mission. The most eloquent example was provided by the journalist Fernando de Collado of the newspaper *Reforma*, which between November 23rd 1998 and February 6th 1999, carried out the task of asking the 18 Ministries of State (*Secretarías*) different kinds of data, ranging from the number of employees in their respective ministries to the number of policemen fired due to corruption and the number of public schools receiving funds for renovations. The outcomes are more than eloquent since out of the 18 ministries not even one provided complete answers to the questions asked. See Fernando de Collado, "El silencio oficial. ¿Cuál derecho a la información?", in *Enfoque*, weekend supplement of *Reforma*, February 7th 1999.

- b) To grant minimum rights to journalists, such as the professional secret²³ and the freedom of conscience clause.²⁴
- c) To create a National Commission of Social Communication with the aim of protecting the freedom of expression from public power abuses, (but without the capacity to establish legal sanctions), and to grant the right to obtain public information.
- d) To secure the right of reply.

The Bill of Social Communication seeks to grant the citizens access to public information, and it proposed:

- a) To oblige the State to provide public information, except in cases of national security or when the information is part of current legal cases in process.
- b) To prohibit that public information from being used to benefit personal interests.
- c) To make public the State expenditures on advertising.
- d) To protect the right to information through the intervention of the National Commission of Social Communication.

After the 2000 elections, the debate on both bills was still being leaded by Javier Corral, who is now the chairman of the Senate's Commission of Communications and Transports. This time things have drastically changed in relation to the bill and the reform: a consensus has been agreed upon the former, resulting in the passing of a new Federal Law of Transparency and Access to Public Information (LFTAIP) in May 24th 2002; whereas in regard to the reform of the LFRT nothing new has been discussed, nor any substantial agreement has been reached.

At the beginning of the Fox administration, the scenario for both issues seemed unclear and confuse. To start with it seemed that the new *Panista* government did not have a clear idea on what kind of information should be kept within the classification of national security and

²³ According the Reform Bill on the LFRT, the "journalist or reporter has the right not to reveal the name or the identity of his/her information sources to the media, to his company, to judicial or administrative authorities or to any other party". In Javier Corral Jurado, "¿Qué busca la iniciativa de Ley Federal de Comunicación?", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, no.56, October-December 1998, p.37.

therefore not disclosed. President Fox's first Co-ordinator of Social Communication (his actual wife, Mrs. Martha Sahagún) declared to the weekly *Proceso* that, according to the document titled *La política de comunicación social del nuevo gobierno*, "the government will never again feed corruption or favouritism in the media".²⁵ In relation to delicate information, she said that the government must organise "as many public audiences as required with the participation of the Congress, the Judicial and the Civil Society, in order to define which files must be opened and which others should remain secret". For such a task, "the prevailing criteria must be the Reason of State".

This confusion proved again to be profitable to those who opposed changes to the LFRT, i.e. the concessionaires, who, though they agreed on the Social Communication bill (the future LFTAIP) and on the elimination of discretionary practices in the awarding and revoking procedures for concessions of the actual LFRT, in relation to the latter's proposed reform they did not accept either the clause on the journalists' freedom of consciousness,²⁶ or the creation of a National Commission of Social Communication that could eventually interfere with the quality of programme content. Moreover, in March 2001 the concessionaires created the Auto-regulation Council, a body composed by them meant to "reduce possible excesses in the programming". However, in real terms this has not worked because it has proved ineffective in obliging the stations to modify their programming.

By the December 2001 the confusion between the two legal projects, the Information Access Bill and the reform to the LFRT, was finally dissipated when President Fox submitted to Congress his Bill on Transparency and Access to Public Information and just two days after (December 6th) another Bill on Access to Public Information was presented by the PRI, PRD, PVEM, PT and also –and curiously—the PAN. After more than five months of debates an important agreement was reached to pass a new law on the matter that combines the best ideas from both bills. The LFTAIP, passed in May 24th and published in the Official Daily in June 11th, was approved in the Chamber of Deputies by

²⁴ Such a clause gives the journalists the right not to participate in any transmission or programme that goes against his/her values and beliefs without endangering the journalists position in the company, i.e. without losing his/her job. *Ibidem*.

²⁵ "Advierte Martha Sahagún: Ni impunidad ni libertinaje en los medios", interview to the Coordinator of Social Communication of the Presidency, in *Proceso*, no.1257, December 3rd, 2000.

²⁶ The concessionaires oppose to this, since such a clause impedes them to freely dismiss their collaborators, at least in the newsrooms.

409 votes and one abstention (no vote against it was recorded), and in the Senate by 86 votes.²⁷

The LFTAIP is a crucial instrument for consolidating the accountability not only of the federal government but of all public institutions of the State, since its primary object is the promotion of "all necessary measures to secure the access of all people to the information under possession of the Union Powers, the autonomous constitutional organs and all other federal entities" (Article 1). Article 4 makes it explicit its purpose for favouring the transparency in the uses of public information when it states that the LFTAIP aims at "providing access to public records and all other kind of public information and documents; making visible the handling of information by the public agencies so that the citizens are able to evaluate the performance of the government in its different areas; contributing to the democratisation of society and the enforcement of the rule of law". Article 7 makes it mandatory that all federal entities publish a complete directory of its employees and officials including full data relating to the salaries and other kind of economic compensations they may receive. This same article obliges all federal departments with the faculty of hiring or awarding in concession different services and goods to particular agents to make public this information including the complete data of the particular agents who are contracted by them. In relation to the federal administrative dependencies, Article 7 also makes it mandatory to publish their budget and the forms in which it is allocated to cover their programmes and expenditures. Article 11 enables any citizen to receive complete information about the budget and the use of public resources of parties and other political associations.

It is important to note that the LFTAIP states in Articles 13 and 14 which kind of information will remain classified as reserved. Article 13 defines as reserved information that which could endanger national security or national defence, put at risk the foreign relations of the country, damage the economic and financial stability, prevent the prosecution of crimes and the administration of justice, disclose relevant information of ongoing judicial trials, and disclose banking, fiscal or industrial secrets. Article 14 emphasises, however, that no information will be classified as reserved if it is related to violations of human and civil rights. Article 15 states that all information classified as

²⁷ In the Chamber of Deputies the votes were as follows: PAN 182 votes, PRI 160 votes, PRD 42 votes, PT 6

reserved will be disclosed after 12 years (earlier even than in the U.S., where it takes 20 years to disclose reserved info).

Finally, the LFTAIP establishes in Article 28 "link units" (*unidad de enlace*) in each federal department and office in charge of providing the information to any interested individual or group who ask for it. Article 29 also creates a Committee of Information in each federal department in charge of classifying and managing the information and documentation. In case, incomplete or no information is provided to the requester, Article 33 has established a Federal Institute of Access to Public Information, with the capacity of making the necessary recommendations to the dependency to provide the requested information, but it can ask the Secretariat of Auditing to establish administrative sanctions to the officials who deny or provide incomplete information. This Institute is also in charge of revising the classification of information made by the different dependencies, of elaborating secondary rules to make easier the provision of information and of protecting the personal data of officials and public servants.

In this way, a great step has been given towards consolidating political accountability in the new Mexican democratic regime. This is a crucial change in the way the government handled information for decades, when this was considered to be a governmental asset instead of a *public* asset. Now, at least, there is the possibility of having the right information for making the most convenient decisions when election times come. However, there are still two remaining gaps to be closed here: on the one hand, the LFTAIP is a law that applies only to the federal administration, to the Congress and the Supreme Court, but not to the states and local administration and governments, which still need to pass local laws in this respect. One might suppose that the most advanced Northern states will do that soon, but what about some provinces in the South still controlled by local strong men and closed groups? On the other hand, though the LFTAIP secures the openness of public records and information, creating the conditions for securing the availability of government information, as long as the LFRT is not reformed in matters of licenses awarding, intervention of government on contents, regulation of public advertising on media, and securing minimum rights to journalists in their profession against different pressures, there will still exist at least the possibility for corruption, prevalence of interests alien to

votes, PVEM 11 votes, other minor parties 8 votes. The abstention was made by one PRI Deputy.

journalism, and collusion between government and media organisations. The reforms of the LFRT are necessary in order to secure definite autonomy and structural independence of the broadcasting media from the government and for making clear the rules within which they can move and act.

It is now important to make some remarks on the condition of the journalists in Mexico. In relation to professional journalism in Mexico, this has for decades been a *rara avis*. As discussed in Chapter One, in this country obtaining public information was for decades a matter of complicity between the journalists and the regime; of keeping good relations with politicians. As one author points out,

The Mexican presidency, the cabinet ministers, the semi-autonomous agencies, the public corporations, and the state and municipal governments—all dominated by federal policies—in their daily operations help the power elite manage the flow of news, shaping its emphasis and regulating its quantity. These primary news sources can voluntarily offer information or attempt to withhold it in ways that contribute to the headline priorities and the descending order of importance of a day's newsworthy events.²⁸

These bizarre relations between the journalists and the regime were maintained not only because of low wages, but also because in most cases there seemed to be no other way for poorly prepared journalists to do their job and collect information in a context of secrecy of government internal information (due to the long absence of any right to access records and to obtain public information). The combination of low levels of professionalism and education for the majority of journalists plus the extreme secrecy of Mexican policy-making and decision-taking processes, condemned them to reporting only on government press releases, bulletins and political speeches. Corruption seemed, to many to be the simplest way to carry out their jobs and improve their financial situation.

It must be taken into consideration that the vast majority of journalists in Mexico have been self-made journalists without a college education. Most of them have become acquainted with the "art" of journalism in the making, and known therefore only the rules to which the regime subjected journalism and the relatively restricted spaces left to them for autonomy and criticism within journalistic enterprises that lacked for so long any sort of ethics code. If one adds to this the fact that until the early 1970s there were very few schools of

²⁸ Alisky. (1981), p.32.

journalism, (before 1949 there were none),²⁹ the low level of journalistic professionalism is not surprising. Moreover, even the majority of schools where it became possible to study journalism had, up until the 1980s, a very low quality of education with vague and inconsistent study programmes.³⁰ In other cases, journalism was not an independent department or faculty in the majority of schools, which in most cases did not teach journalism, but a more generic area under the name of communications sciences.³¹

However, things are changing in Mexico. The earlier openness of the printed press through publications such as the weekly *Proceso* or independent newspapers like *UnoMasUno*, *La Jornada*, *El Financiero*, *Reforma* and *Milenio* in Mexico City and like *Zeta* in Tijuana, *El Diario de Yucatán* in Mérida, *El Norte* in Monterrey or *El Imparcial* in Hermosillo, was the outcome of the conscious efforts of professional journalists to create independent and autonomous spaces for information and criticism. As shown in Chapter Four, the hiring of professional printed press journalists as newscasters by the radio stations strongly reinforced the growing openness of the radio news broadcasts (where there were already some independent radio newscasters, like Francisco Huerta or José Gutiérrez Vivó). In the last years, more universities have opened programmes on journalism,³² and the broadcast networks are developing closer links with schools of journalism and faculties for recruitment and collaboration.³³ It becomes clear that, though the LFTAIP has been passed and that, in general terms Mexican journalism has become an independent activity, there are still many battles to fight at the local level in some provinces (especially in certain Southern states as Tabasco, Guerrero and Chiapas). Today, however, the main challenges

²⁹ The first school of journalism, Carlos Septién García School, was established in 1949. Since then during the 1950s the Journalism Faculty of the Universidad Veracruzana was created along with the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of the UNAM, which also began communications studies. However, it was not until the late 1960s that new schools were inaugurated and more importance was given to the formation of journalists in private universities, like the Iberoamerican University (though under the subject Communications Sciences).

³⁰ José Baldivia Urdininea, (ed.), *La formación de los periodistas en América Latina (México, Chile y Costa Rica)*, Mexico City, Nueva Imagen/Ceestem, 1981, pgs.83-84.

³¹ Torres, (1997), p.147.

³² For instance, the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey inaugurated in 1998 a B.A. on Mass Media and Journalism expressly aimed at forming research journalists.

³³ An example is Televisa's co-sponsorship of the annual "Espacio Universitario de Periodismo y Comunicación" with journalism schools and faculties and with the *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*.

facing journalism come not from the political side, but from groups and organisations that react against the growing professionalism of journalists: Mafia and drug cartels.³⁴

To sum up, though broadcast media in Mexico have developed a greater autonomy and openness, there are still important steps to be taken to attain the right conditions, (both legal conditions and conditions of security), in order to consolidate a truly independent media regime. The changes both on radio and TV in the last fifteen years have undoubtedly generated a mass media system that, in general terms, is now quite open. For the licensees it is also clear that if they want to continue making profits with their news broadcasts in an increasingly competitive market, they are obliged to improve the quality of these programmes, to hire more professional anchormen and newscasters, and to present the information in ways that make it credible for their audiences. In this new scenario, the media business does not have a determined political preference for all stations all the time. However, the openness of the actual broadcast media in Mexico, still requires other forms of support to consolidate a structurally independent media system. The LFTAIP is a great step. Also the openness of the media during the last fifteen years has responded to new ways of presenting information due mainly to the emergence of competitive conditions in a situation of economic crisis and instability that forced the media to innovate their formats and their contents, and thus trespass the limits of tolerance of the PRI regime. It is true, that today there is another party in power and there is now a LFTAIP, but the legislation and formal rules that govern the broadcast media are still what they have been for the last forty years and the rights of journalists are still not secured. Without proper changes in these areas, nothing can ensure that collusion will not develop in the future amongst the media and government encouraged by the unclear provisions of actual legislation. A new Federal Broadcasting Law is also required to secure conditions for autonomy and independence of the media. This is the only way to ensure that the broadcast media openness consolidates

³⁴ The Foundation Manuel Buendia (www.cem.itesm.mx/dacs/buendia/) has developed a database on different acts against media and journalists entitled "Actos Cometidos contra Medios y Periodistas", where a wide documentation is found on cases of the murder and intimidation of journalists by drug cartels and other illegal organisations. Perhaps one of the most well-known cases is that of the editor of the Tijuana daily *Zeta*, Mr. Blanco Ornelas, who has been the target of several murder attempts due to his investigations and reports on drug traffic activities on the Mexico-U.S. border.

into structural independence and autonomy, crucial requisites to allow the media to play a truly supportive role for democracy.

Bibliography

Books and Journals:

- Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos, *Las elecciones federales de 1997 en cuatro noticiarios de televisión*, Mexico City, AMDH, 1997.
- Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos, *Observación de gastos de campaña para Jefe de Gobierno del Distrito Federal*, Mexico City, AMDH, 1997
- Acosta Valverde, Miguel. 1997. "Las elecciones federales de 1997 según TV Azteca y Televisa", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*. No. 49, June-July. Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía.
- Adler, Ilya. 1993. "The Mexican Case: The Media in the 1988 Presidential Election", in Thomas Skidmore (ed.), *Television, Politics and the Transition to Democracy in Latin America*. Baltimore, ML: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Aguayo Quezada, Sergio and Miguel Acosta. 1997. *Urnas y pantallas. La batalla por la información*. Mexico City: Océano/Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos.
- Aguayo Quezada, Sergio and Miguel Acosta. 1997. *Urnas y pantallas. La batalla por la información*. Mexico City: Océano/Academia Mexicana de Derechos Humanos.
- Aguilar Camín, Héctor and Lorenzo Meyer. 1991. *A la sombra de la Revolución mexicana*. Mexico City: Ed. Cal y Arena.
- Aguilar Camín, Héctor. 1994. "Compuerta". *Nexos*, no.201, September.
- Aguilar Camín, Héctor. 1997. "México al fin del milenio, a mitad del camino". *Nexos* no.239, November.
- Alcaraz, Rodolfo. 1966. "Sesenta años de periodismo mexicano", *Historia y sociedad*, no.6, Mexico City.
- Alemán Velasco, Miguel. 1976. "El Estado y la televisión", in *Nueva Política*. no.3, July-September.
- Alemán Velasco, Miguel. 1976. "El Estado y la televisión", in *Nueva Política*. no.3, July-September.
- Alisky, Marvin. 1954. "Early Mexican Broadcasting", in *Hispanic American Historical Review*. Vol.34, no.4, November.

- Alisky, Marvin. 1981. *Latin American Media: Guidance and Censorship*. Iowa: Iowa State University Press/Ames.
- Alva de la Selva, Alma Rosa. 1986. *Radio e ideología*. Third edition. Mexico City: El Caballito.
- Alva de la Selva, Alma Rosa. 1988. "Radio: punta de lanza del consorcio", in Raul Trejo Delarbre, (coord.). *Las redes de Televisa*. Mexico City: Claves Latinoamericanas.
- Alva de la Selva, Alma Rosa. 1997. "La pista de los comicios federales en la TV", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*. No.50, August-September. Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía.
- Alva de la Selva, Alma Rosa. 1998. "La televisión en 1997: expansión y lucha de poder", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*. No.52. January-February. Mexico City, Fundación Manuel Buendía.
- Amaral, Roberto and Cesar Guimaraes, 1988. "Brazilian television: a rapid conversion to the New Order", in Elizabeth Fox (ed.), *Media and Politics in Latin America: The Struggle for Democracy*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Amaral, Roberto and Cesar Guimaraes. 1994. "Media monopoly in Brazil". in *Journal of Communication*, vol. 44, no.4, Autumn.
- Arndt, Renate. "El rol de la prensa en el proceso de cambio de régimen en Uruguay". 1994. In Carlos H. Filgueira and Dieter Nohlen, (eds.), *Prensa y transición democrática: experiencias recientes en Europa y América Latina*. Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert.
- Arredondo Ramírez, Pablo. 1991. "Los medios de comunicación en la lucha político-electoral", in Pablo Arredondo Ramírez, Gilberto Fregoso Peralta and Raúl Trejo Delarbre. *Así se calló el sistema. Comunicación y elecciones en 1988*. Guadalajara: University of Guadalajara.
- Arredondo Ramírez, Pablo. 1991. "Los medios de comunicación en la lucha político-electoral", in Pablo Arredondo Ramírez, Gilberto Fregoso Peralta and Raúl Trejo Delarbre. *Así se calló el sistema. Comunicación y elecciones en 1988*. Guadalajara: University of Guadalajara.
- Arredondo Ramírez, Pablo and Enrique E. Sánchez Ruiz. 1987. *Comunicación social, poder y democracia en México*. 2nd Ed., Guadalajara: University of Guadalajara.

- Arredondo Ramírez, Pablo and Lourdes Zermeño Torres. 1986. "La política informativa de Televisa en los Estados Unidos (El caso de 24 Horas)". In *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, University of California, Vol.2, no.1, Winter.
- Arredondo Ramírez, Pablo and Lourdes Zermeño Torres. 1986. "La política informativa de Televisa en los Estados Unidos (El caso de 24 Horas)". In *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, University of California, Vol.2, no.1, Winter.
- Arredondo Ramírez, Pablo. 1990. "Los noticieros de televisión y la sucesión presidencial de 1988", in Seminar on *Medios, democracia y fines*. Mexico City: UNAM, Frederick Naumann Stiftung & Notimex.
- Arredondo Ramírez, Pablo. 1990. "Los noticieros de televisión y la sucesión presidencial de 1988", in Seminar on *Medios, democracia y fines*. Mexico City: UNAM, Frederick Naumann Stiftung & Notimex.
- Arredondo Ramírez, Pablo. 1991. "Opacidad en la ventana electrónica: el proceso electoral de 1988 en los noticiarios televisivos" (1991b), in Pablo Arredondo Ramírez, Gilberto Fregoso Peralta and Raúl Trejo Delarbre. *Así se calló el sistema. Comunicación y elecciones en 1988*. Guadalajara: University of Guadalajara.
- Arriaga, Patricia. 1980. *Publicidad, economía y comunicación masiva. Estados Unidos y México*. Mexico City: CEESTEM.
- Arriola, Carlos and Juan Gustavo Galindo. 1984. "Los empresarios y el Estado en México (1976-1982)", in *Foro Internacional*. vol.XXV, no.2, October-December.
- Aziz Nassif , Alberto y Juan Molinar Horcasitas. 1990. "Los resultados electorales", in Pablo González Casanova (coord.), *Segundo informe sobre la democracia. México el 6 de julio de 1988*, Mexico City: Siglo XXI.
- Azteca Avances. 1997. No.24, Mexico City: TV Azteca, February.
- Bagdikian, Ben. 1971. *The Information Machines*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Baistow, Tom. 1985. *Fourth-Rate Estate*. London: Commedia.
- Baldivia Urdininea, José (ed.). 1981. *La formación de los periodistas en América Latina (México, Chile y Costa Rica)*. Mexico City: Nueva Imagen/Ceestem.
- Basáñez, Miguel. 1985. *La lucha por la hegemonía en México, 1968-1980*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI.

- Basáñez, Miguel. 1985. *La lucha por la hegemonía en México, 1968-1980*. Mexico City: Siglo XXI.
- Basurto, Jorge. 1970. "Obstáculos al cambio en el movimiento obrero", in *El perfil de México en 1980*. Vol.3, Mexico City: Ed. Siglo XXI.
- Becerra Acosta, Manuel. 1985. *Dos poderes*. Mexico City: Grijalbo.
- Bensusan, Graciela and Gerardo Zamora Fernández de Lara. 1990. "Política laboral y proyecto de gobierno", in Manuel Canto Chac and Víctor Durand Ponte (coords.). *Política y gobierno en la transición mexicana*. Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana.
- Bensusan, Graciela. 1989. "Instituciones en crisis: el mundo del trabajo en transformación", in G. Bensusan and Carlos García, *Estado y sindicatos, crisis de una relación*. Mexico City: Metropolitan Autonomous University-Xochimilco and Friederich Ebert Stiftung.
- Berelson, Bernard. 1959. "The State of Communication Research". *Public Opinion Quarterly*. No.23.
- Bernal Sahagún, Víctor Manuel. 1993. *Anatomía de la publicidad en México. Monopolios, enajenación y desperdicio*. Mexico City: Nuestro Tiempo.
- Bernal Sahagún, Víctor Manuel. 1993. *Anatomía de la publicidad en México. Monopolios, enajenación y desperdicio*. Mexico City: Nuestro Tiempo.
- Blumer, Jay G. and Michael Gurevitch. 1981. "Politicians and the Press: An Essay on Role Relationships", in Dan D. Nimmo and Keith R. Sanders (eds.), *Handbook of Political Communication*. London: Sage.
- Bohmann, Karin. 1986. *Medios de comunicación y sistemas informativos en México*. Mexico City: Alianza Editorial.
- Bohmann, Karin. 1997. *Medios de comunicación y sistemas informativos en México*. Mexico City: Alianza Editorial.
- Castellot de Ballin, Laura. 1993. *Historia de la televisión en México narrada por sus protagonistas*. Mexico City: Alpe.
- Castellot de Ballin, Laura. 1993. *Historia de la televisión en México narrada por sus protagonistas*. Mexico City: Alpe.

- Castro Leal, Antonio. 1969. "Radio y televisión", in *Los medios de comunicación de masas en México*. Series of Studies, no.10, Mexico City: FCPS-UNAM.
- Code of Ethics of the *Society of Professional Journalism*: http://spj.org/ethics_code.asp
- Código Federal de Instituciones y Procedimientos Electorales. 1996. In *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, Wednesday, August 15th.
- Cole, Richard, (ed.). 1996. *Communication in Latin America: Journalism, Mass Media and Society*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books.
- Cole, Richard. 1975. "The Mexican Press System: aspects of growth, control and ownership", in *Gazette*, no.21.
- Cremoux, Raúl. 1974. *¿Televisión o prisión electrónica?* Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Crespo, José Antonio. 1992. "Crisis económica; crisis de legitimidad", in Carlos Bazdresch, et.al. (comps.). *México: auge, crisis y ajuste*, vol.1, *Los tiempos del cambio, 1982-1988*. Mexico City: F.C.E..
- Curran, James. 1991. "Mass media and Democracy: a reappraisal", in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch. *Mass Media and Society*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Dahl, Robert. 1961. *Who Governs?*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- De la Garza, Enrique. 1989. *Ascenso y crisis del Estado social autoritario*. Mexico City: El Colegio de México.
- De Noriega, Luis A. and F. Leach. 1979. *Broadcasting in Mexico*. London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul.
- De Sola Pool, Ithiel, 1973. "Communications in totalitarian societies", in I. de Sola Pool, Wilbur Schram, et.al. *Handbook of Political Communication*. Chicago, Ill: Rand McNally College Publishing Co.
- De Sola Pool, Ithiel. 1983. *Forecasting the Telephone*. New York: Ablex.
- De Sola Pool, Ithiel. 1984. *Technologies of Freedom*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Dirección de Normas y Sistemas de Difusión, *Informe de labores, 1989-1994*. 1995. Mexico City: Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes.
- Downing, John D. H. 1996. *Internationalizing Media Theory: Transition, Power Culture*. Thousand Oaks, CAL: Sage.

- Eisenstadt, Todd. 2000. "Eddies in the Third Wave: Protracted Transitions and Theories of Democratization", in *Democratization*. Vol.7, no.3, Autumn.
- Esquivel Puerto, Emilio. 1970. *Anecdotalario de radio y televisión*. Mexico City: Publicidad Latina.
- Esteinou Madrid, Javier. 1989. "Los medios de comunicación y los terremotos de 1985", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, no.8, November-December.
- Faraone, Roque and Elizabeth Fox. 1988. "Political communication in Uruguay", in Elizabeth Fox (ed.). *Media and Politics in Latin America: The Struggle for Democracy*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Fernández Christlieb, Fátima. 1985. "Génesis del sistema de satélites Morelos", *Información Científica y Tecnológica*. Mexico City: CONACyT, Vol.7, no.100.
- Fernández Christlieb, Fátima. 1985. "Génesis del sistema de satélites Morelos", *Información Científica y Tecnológica*. Mexico City: CONACyT, Vol.7, no.100.
- Fernández Christlieb, Fátima. 1996. *Los medios de difusión masiva en México*. 10th Edition. Mexico City: Juan Pablos.
- Fernández Christlieb, Fátima. 1997. *La radio mexicana. Centro y Regiones*. Mexico City: Juan Pablos.
- Fernández, Claudia. 1999. *El Tigre: Emilio Azcarraga y su imperio Televisa*. Mexico City: Grijalbo.
- Fernando de Collado. 1999. "El silencio oficial. ¿Cuál derecho a la información?", in *Enfoque*. Weekend supplement of *Reforma*. February 7th.
- Fitzgerald, E.V.K. 1979. "Stabilization Policy in Mexico: the Fiscal Deficit and Macroeconomic Equilibrium, 1960-1977", in Rosemary Thorp and Lawrence Whitehead. *Inflation and Stabilization in Latin America*. London: McMillian.
- Fox, Elizabeth. 1988. "Conclusions", in Fox, Elizabeth (ed.). *Media and Politics in Latin America: The Struggle for Democracy*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Gans, Herbert J. 1979. *Deciding What's News*. New York: Pantheon.
- Garton Ash, Timothy. 1990. *We the People. The Revolution of 89*. Cambridge: Granta Books.
- Giorgi, Liana. 1995. *The Post-Socialist Media: What Power the West?* Aldershot, U.K.: Avebury.

- González Gómez, Mauricio A. 1998. "Crisis and Economic Change in Mexico", in Susan Kaufman Purcell and Luis Rubio (eds.). *Mexico under Zedillo*, Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Gonzalez Molina, Gabriel. 1987. "Mexican television news: the imperatives of corporate rationale", in *Media, Culture and Society*. Vol.9, no.2, April.
- Granados Chapa, Miguel Ángel. 1981. *Examen de la comunicación en México*. Mexico City: El Caballito.
- Grupo Televisa, *Informe Anual 1996*, Mexico City, Bolsa Mexicana de Valores, 1997.
- Guerrero, Manuel Alejandro. 1995. *Estado y legitimidad en México*. B.A. Thesis in International Relations, Mexico City, El Colegio de México.
- Guerrero, Manuel Alejandro. 1998. "Los avances de la oposición en el Congreso Federal", in the *Parliamentary Encyclopaedia of Mexico*, series IV *El Congreso y las Políticas Nacionales*, vol.II *El Congreso de la Unión y la Política Económica de México*, no. 3, *El Congreso en las Reformas Políticas de México*. Mexico City: Talleres Gráficos de la Unión.
- Guerrero, Manuel Alejandro. 2000. "Los medios de comunicación y los nuevos retos democráticos en México". On the journalistic web site www.pulso.org/Espanol/Archivo/index.htm
- Gutiérrez Espíndola, José Luis and M.P. Lobato. 1989. "Información radiofónica: el mundo en tres minutos", in María Antonieta Rebeil Corella, Alma Rosa Alva de la Selva and Ignacio Rodríguez Zárate (coords.). *Perfiles del cuadrante. Experiencias de la radio*, Mexico City, Ed. Trillas.
- Gutiérrez Espíndola, José Luis. 1985. "Información y necesidades sociales/Los noticiarios de Televisa", in Raúl Trejo Delarbre (coord.). *Televisa, el quinto poder*. Mexico City: Claves Latinoamericanas.
- Hall, Richard A. and Patrick O'Neil. 1998. "Institutions, transitions and the media: a comparison of Hungary and Romania", in Patrick O'Neil, (ed.). *Communicating Democracy. The Media and Political Transitions*, Boulder, CO: Lynne-Rienner Publishers.
- Hernández Laos Enrique and Jorge Córdoba Chávez, 1979. "Estructura de la distribución del ingreso en México", in *Comercio Exterior*, no.5, May.

- Hernández Rodríguez, Rogelio. 1987. "Los hombres del presidente De la Madrid", in *Foro Internacional*. Vol. XXVIII, no.1, July-September.
- Hernández Rodríguez, Rogelio. 1988. *Empresarios, banca y Estado, el conflicto durante el gobierno de José López Portillo, 1976-1982*. México City: Miguel Angel Porrúa and FLACSO.
- Hester, Al and Kristina White, (eds.). 1993. *Creating a Free Press in Eastern Europe*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Heuvel, Jon Vanden and Everette E. Dennis. 1993. *The Unfolding Lotus: East Asia's Changing Media*. N.Y.: Freedom Forum Media Studies Center, Columbia University.
- Hirsch, P.M.. 1977. "Occupational, Organizational and Institutional Models in Mass Communications", in P.M. Hirsch et.al. *Strategies for Communication Research*, London: Sage.
- Holzmann, Abraham. 1966. *Interest Group and Lobbying*. New York: MacMillan.
- Huerta González, Arturo. 1997. *Carteras vencidas. Inestabilidad financiera*. Mexico City: Diana.
- Huerta, Francisco. 1997. *Crónica del periodismo civil. La voz del ciudadano*. Mexico City: Grijalbo.
- Huesca Rebolledo, Sabás. 1999. "La noticia por televisión", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas and María del Pilar Ramírez (coords.). *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana*. Mexico City: Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press.
- IFE and IJ-UNAM. 1996. *Reporte sobre consumo de medios en México*, México City: UNAM.
- Indermec-Louis Harris, "Estudio de Hábitos y Consumo de los Radioescuchas de la República Mexicana". 1996. Mexico City: I.L.H.
- Iyengar, Shanto and Donald R. Kinder. 1987. *News That Matters: American Television and Public Opinion*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

- Javier Corral Jurado. 1998. "¿Qué busca la iniciativa de Ley Federal de Comunicación?". *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, No.56, October-December.
- Johnson, Owen V. 1998. "The Media and Democracy in Eastern Europe", in Patrick O'Neil, (ed.). *Communicating Democracy. The Media and Political Transitions*. Boulder, CO: Lynne-Rienner Publishers.
- Keane, John. 1991. *The Media and Democracy*. London: Polity Press.
- Kelley, David and Roger Donway. 1990. "Liberalism and free speech", in Judith Lichtenberg (ed.). *Democracy and the Mass Media*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kettle, Steve. 1997. "The development of the Czech media since the fall of Communism", in Patrick O'Neil, (ed.). *Post-Communism and the Media in Eastern Europe*. London: Frank Cass.
- Klapper, Joseph. 1960. *The Effects of Mass Communications*. New York: Free Press.
- Lance Bennett, W. 1988. *News. The Politics of Illusion*. New York: Longman.
- Lanczi, Andras and Patrick O'Neil, 1997. "Pluralization and the politics of media change in Hungary", in Patrick O'Neil, (ed.). *Post-Communism and the Media in Eastern Europe*. London: Frank Cass.
- Lawson, Chappell. "El cuarto poder: La prensa independiente en Mexico". Internet Version on the Journalistic Web Site *Pulso del Periodismo* (www.pulso.org/Espanol/Archivo/hemisphere.htm).
- Lazarsfeld, Paul, Bernard Berelson and Gaudet. 1944. *The Peoples' Choice*. N.Y.: Columbia University Press.
- Leftwich Curry, Jane. 1989. *Poland's Journalists: Professionalism and Politics*. N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.
- Leñero, Vicente. 1999. *Los periodistas*, 3rd Ed., Mexico City: Joaquín Mortiz.
- Lent, John A. 1989. "Mass Communication in the Pacific: Recent Trends and Developments", in *Media Asia*, Vol. 16, no.1.
- Lent, John A. 1998. "The mass media in Asia", in Patrick O'Neil, (ed.). *Communicating Democracy. The Media and Political Transitions*. Boulder, CO: Lynne-Rienner Publishers.

- León Martínez, Enrique. 1998. *Los medios de comunicación en el proceso político de México*. Mexico City: IPN.
- Levy, Daniel C. 1989. "Mexico: sustained civilian rule without democracy", in Linz, Juan J., Larry Diamond and Seymour M. Lipset (eds.). *Democracy in Developing Countries*, vol.4, *Latin America*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Lindblom, Charles E. 1977. *Politics and Markets. The World's Political-Economic Systems*. New York: Basic Books.
- Linz, Juan J. 1970. "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain", in Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan (eds.). *Mass Politics: Studies in Political Sociology*. New York: Free Press.
- Llano, Serafina and Óscar Morales. 1984. *La radiodifusión en México*. Mexico City: Comunicación, Tecnología e Investigación, S.C.
- Loaeza, Soledad, 1985. "Las clases medias mexicanas y la coyuntura económica actual", in *México ante la crisis*. Vol. II, Mexico City: Siglo XXI.
- Loaeza, Soledad. 1992. "Delamadridismo, la segunda modernización", in Carlos Bazdresch, et.al. (comps.). *México: auge, crisis y ajuste*, vol.1, *Los tiempos del cambio, 1982-1988*. Mexico City: F.C.E..
- Loaeza, Soledad. 1993. "1968: los orígenes de la transición", in Ilan Semo et.al. *La transición interrumpida. México 1968-1988*. Mexico City: Iberoamerican University and Nueva Imagen.
- Loaeza, Soledad. 1999. *El Partido Acción Nacional la larga marcha, 1939-1994: oposición leal y partido de protesta*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- López Cámara, Francisco. 1971. *El desafío de la clase media*. Mexico City: Cuadernos de Joaquín Mortiz.
- López Cámara, Francisco. 1988. *La clase media en la era del populismo*. Mexico City: Miguel Angel Porrúa/UNAM Colección *Las Ciencias Sociales*.
- Loyola Díaz, Rafael and Samuel León González. 1992. "El Partido Revolucionario Institucional: los intentos de cambio", in Jorge Alonso, Alberto Aziz and Jaime Tamayo (comps.). *El nuevo Estado mexicano. II. Estado y política*, Mexico City: Ed. Nueva Imagen.
- Lozoya, Jorge Alberto. 1974. "La TV estatal en México: notas sobre un intento", in *Foro Internacional*. vol. XIV, no.3, January-March.

- Lukes, Steven. 1974. *Power, A Radical View*. London: MacMillan.
- Luna Ledesma, Matilde. 1992. *Los empresarios y el cambio político, México 1970-1987*. Mexico City: UNAM and Era.
- Marger, Martin N. 1993. "The Mass Media as a Power Institution", in Marvin E. Olsen and M.N. Merger (eds.). *Power in Modern Societies*. Boulder CO.: Westview Press.
- Martínez Medellín, Francisco J. 1992. *Televisa. Siga la huella*, Mexico City: Claves Latinoamericanas.
- Martínez, Omar Raúl. 2000. "Datos duros sobre monitoreos de coberturas electorales", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, vol.63, May-June. Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía 2000.
- Mejía Barquera, Fernando. 1982. *La industria de la radio y la televisión y la política del Estado mexicano*. B.A. Thesis, FCPyS. Mexico City: UNAM.
- Mejía Barquera, Fernando. 1985. "50 años de televisión comercial en México, (1934-1984). Cronología", in Raúl Trejo Delarbre (coord.). *Televisa, el quinto poder*. Mexico City: Claves Latinoamericanas.
- Mejía Barquera, Fernando. 1988. "Impuestos y tarifas. Los recursos de la nación a bajo precio". In Raul Trejo Delarbre (coord.). *Las redes de Televisa*. Mexico City: Claves Latinoamericanas.
- Mejía Barquera, Fernando. 1988. "Impuestos y tarifas. Los recursos de la nación a bajo precio". In Raul Trejo Delarbre (coord.). *Las redes de Televisa*. Mexico City: Claves Latinoamericanas.
- Mejía Barquera, Fernando. 1989. *La industria de la radio y la televisión y la política del Estado mexicano*, vol.1, Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía.
- Mejía Barquera, Fernando. 1998. "Del Canal 4 a Televisa", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas (coord.). *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana*. Mexico City: Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa.
- Mejía Barquera, Fernando. 1999. "Historia mínima de la radio mexicana", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas (coord.). *Apuntes para una historia de la radio mexicana*. Mexico City: RMC/Espacio.
- Mejía Barquera, Fernando. 1999a. "Historia mínima de la radio mexicana", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas (coord.). *Apuntes para una historia de la radio mexicana*.

- Mexico City: RMC/Espacio. Also available on internet:
www.cem.itesm/buendia/seminario/mejia1.html
- Mejía Barquera, Fernando. 1999b. "Televisión y política", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas and María del Pilar Ramírez (coords.). *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana II*. Mexico City: Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa.
- Mejía Barquera, Fernando. 2000. "Nuevo escenario radiofónico", in *Etcétera*, Mexico City, no.388, July 7th.
- Meléndez, Jorge. 1989. "No habrá democracia sin apertura de medios", on the Symposium on *Medios, democracia y fines*. Mexico City: UNAM/Friederich Nauman Stiftung/Notimex.
- Meyer, Lorenzo. 1989. "El corporativismo mexicano en tiempos del neoliberalismo", in G. Bensusan and Carlos García, *Estado y sindicatos, crisis de una relación*. Mexico City: Metropolitan Autonomous University-Xochimilco and Friederich Ebert Stiftung.
- Meyer, Lorenzo. 1991. "El limite neoliberal", in *Nexos*. No.163, July.
- Miguel Acosta Valverde, Manuel Martínez Torres and Luz Paula Parra R. (coords.). 1995. *Las elecciones de 1994 en México vistas por los medios de comunicación. (18 de julio al 21 de agosto)*. Mexico City: AMDH/Alianza Cívica-Observación 94.
- Miguel Acosta Valverde, Manuel Martínez Torres and Luz Paula Parra R. (coords.). 1995. *Las elecciones de 1994 en México vistas por los medios de comunicación. (18 de julio al 21 de agosto)*. Mexico City: AMDH/Alianza Cívica-Observación 94.
- Mill, J.S. 1989. *On Liberty and Other Writings*. Edited by Stefan Collini, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Milton, Andrew K. 1997. "News Media Reform in Eastern Europe: A Cross-National Comparison", in Patrick O'Neil, (ed.). *Post-Communism and the Media in Eastern Europe*. London: Frank Cass.
- Miró, Juan José. 1997. *La televisión y el poder político en México*. Mexico City: Diana.
- Molinar, Juan. 1987. "Regreso a Chihuahua", *Nexos*. No. 111, March.
- Molinar, Juan. 1988. "La asfixia electoral", *Nexos*. No 123, March.

- Montabés Pereira, Juan and Manuel Trenzado Romero. 1994. "El escenario simbólico del caso portugués", in Carlos H. Filgueira and Dieter Nohlen, (eds.). *Prensa y transición democrática: experiencias recientes en Europa y América Latina*. Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert.
- Nation's General Archives, *Ramo Presidentes*, Acervo Miguel Alemán, Expedient No. 523/14.
- Nichols, John Spicer. 1979. *Coyotes of the Press: Professionalization of Mexican Journalist*. Ph.D. Thesis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press.
- North Carolina's Civic Journalism <http://research.unc.edu/endeavors/aut97/dial.htm>
- Núñez Arellano, Carlos. 1974. *Las telecomunicaciones en México*. Mexico City: P.R.I., Instituto de Estudios Políticos, Económicos y Sociales.
- Núñez Arellano, Carlos. 1974. *Las telecomunicaciones en México*. Mexico City: P.R.I., Instituto de Estudios Políticos, Económicos y Sociales.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo, Philippe C. Schmitter and Lawrence Whitehead, (eds.). 1996. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*. 4 volumes, Baltimore ML: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Olmos, Alejandro. 1995. "La marea de la crisis economica arrastra a los medios mexicanos", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*. n.40, May-July, Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía.
- Olmos, Alejandro. 1997. "La TV en 1996: nexos políticos, pugnas y sensacionalismo", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*. No.47, February-March.. Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía.
- Olmos, Alejandro. 1998. "Del Canal 13 a TV Azteca", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas (coord.). *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana*. Mexico City: Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa.
- Olmos, Alejandro. 1999. "Algunos protagonistas de la televisión", in Sánchez de Armas and María del Pilar Ramírez (coords.). *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana II*. Mexico City: Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa.
- Olmos, Alejandro. 1999. "Algunos protagonistas de la televisión", in Sánchez de Armas and María del Pilar Ramírez (coords.). *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana II*. Mexico City: Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa.

- Olmos, Alejandro. 1999. "Algunos protagonistas de la televisión", in Miguel Ángel Sánchez de Armas and María Del Pilar Sevilla (coords.), *Apuntes para una historia de la televisión mexicana II*. Mexico City: Revista Mexicana de Comunicación and Televisa.
- Olson, Mancur. 1965. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Ortega, Reynaldo Yunuen. 2000. "Comparing Types of Transitions: Spain and Mexico", *Democratization*. Vol.7, no.3, Autumn.
- Oteo, Luis Esparza. 1981. *La política cultural del Estado mexicano y el desarrollo de la televisión*. Mexico City: SEP.
- Padgett, Vincent. 1966. *The Mexican Political System*. Boston, MASS: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Pánuco Lagunete Humberto and Miguel Székely. 1996. "Income distribution and poverty in Mexico" in Victor Bulmer Thomas (ed.). *The New Economic Model and its Impact on Income Distribution and Poverty*, N.Y.: San Martin's Press.
- Parenti, Michael. 1986. *Inventing Reality. The politics of the Mass Media*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Pérez Espino, Efraín. 1979. "El monopolio de la televisión comercial en México (el caso de Televisa)". In *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*. Vol. XLI, no.4, October-December.
- Pérez Espino, Efraín. 1979. "El monopolio de la televisión comercial en México (el caso de Televisa)". In *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*. Vol. XLI, no.4, October-December.
- Pew Center for Civic Journalism in Washington, D.C., at: www.cpn.org/sections/affiliates/pew.html
- Philo, Greg. 1993. "Political advertising, popular belief and the 1992 British general election", in *Media, Culture and Society*. Vol.15, no.3, July.
- Plan Basico de Gobierno, 1976-1982, 1975*. Partido Revolucionario Institucional, VIII Asamblea Nacional Ordinaria, September 25th, Mexico City: Ed. PRI.
- Randall, Vicky. 1993. "The media and democratization in the Third World", in *Third World Quarterly*. Vol.14, no.3.
- Randall, Vicky. 1998. *Democratization and the Media*. London: Frank Cass.

- Reyna, José Luis. 1974. *Control político, estabilidad y desarrollo en México*. CES Working Paper, no.3. Mexico City: Centro de Estudios Sociológicos, El Colegio de México.
- Riva-Palacio, Raymundo. 1992. "The kept Mexican press", in *Nieman Reports*, no.2, Summer.
- Rivers, William. 1970. *The Adversaries: Politics and the Press*. Boston, MASS: Beacon Press.
- Roldan, Gary. 1998. "The Internet and Political Control in Singapore", in *Political Science Quarterly*. Vol. 113, no. 1, Spring.
- Salisbury, Robert H. 1975. "Interest Groups", in Fred. I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (eds.). *Handbook of Political Science*. Vol.4, *Nongovernmental Politics*, Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.
- Sánchez Ruiz, Enrique. 1984. "Orígenes de la radiodifusión en México. Desarrollo Capitalista y el Estado", in *Huella*. no.9, Guadalajara: ITESO.
- Sánchez Ruiz, Enrique. 1994. "El público de la prensa: la insoportable levedad del casi no ser", in J. Carlos Lozano (ed.). *Anuario de Investigación CONEHC*, no.1, Mexico City.
- Schmitter, Philippe C. 1979. "Still the Century of Corporatism?", in P.C. Schmitter and Gerhard Lembruch (eds.). *Trends Towards Corporatist Intermediation*. London: Sage.
- Secretaría de Gobernación, *Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, Mexico City, Segob, December 1996.
- Secretaría de Hacienda y Crédito Público y Secretaría de la Contraloría General de la Federación, 1994. *Desincorporación de entidades paraestatales*, Mexico City: F.C.E.
- Segovia, Rafael. 1981. "Prensa, verdad y progresismo", in *Razones*. no.35.
- Singer, Andre. 1994. "Nota sobre o papel da imprensa na transicao brasileira", in Carlos H. Filgueira and Dieter Nohlen, (eds.). *Prensa y transición democrática: experiencias recientes en Europa y América Latina*. Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert.
- Singer, Leticia. 1993. *Mordaza de papel*. Mexico City: El Caballito.

- Skidmore, Thomas (ed.). 1993. *Television, Politics and the Transition to Democracy in Latin America*. Baltimore, ML: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Skolkay, Andrej. 1996. "Journalists, political elites and the post-Communist public: the case of Slovakia", in *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*. Vol.12, no.4.
- Solís, Leopoldo. 1977. *El desarrollo estabilizador*. Conference Presented at El Colegio Nacional, May.
- Sosa Plata, Gabriel and Alberto Esquivel. 1997. *Las mil y una radios. Una historia, un análisis actual de la radiodifusión mexicana*. Mexico City: McGraw-Hill.
- Sosa Plata, Gabriel. 1996. "Focos de emergencia para la radio mexicana", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, no.43, February-April. Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía 1996.
- Sosa Plata, Gabriel. 1997. "Panorama estable para la radio mexicana en 1996", *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*, No.47, February-March. Mexico City: Fundación Manuel Buendía.
- Sosa Plata, Gabriel. 1998. "Se vitamina el cuadrante radiofonico mexicano", in *Revista Mexicana de Comunicación*. N.52, January-February, México City, Fundación Manuel Buendía.
- Splichal, Slavko. 1994. *Media Beyond Socialism*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Stern, Claudio. 1990. "Notas para la delimitación de las clases medias en México", in Loaeza, Soledad and Claudio Stern. *Las clases medias en la coyuntura actual*. CES Working Paper, no.33. Mexico City: Centro de Estudios Sociologicos, El Colegio de México.
- Sussman, Leonard R. 1989. *Power, the Press and the Technology of Freedom: The Coming age of ISDN*. N.Y.: Freedom House.
- Tello Macías, Carlos. 1979. *La política económica en México, 1970-1976*. México City: Siglo XXI.
- The Carter Center's Report. Delegation to Observe the July 6th, 1997 Elections in México*. 1997. Atlanta, GA.: The Carter Center, Latin American and Caribbean Program.

- Torres A., Francisco Javier. 1997. *El periodismo mexicano. Ardua lucha por su integridad*. Mexico City: Ediciones Coyoacán.
- Trejo Delarbre, Raúl. 1991. *Ver, pero tambien leer*. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional del Consumidor.
- Trejo Delarbre, Raúl. 1991. *Ver, pero tambien leer*. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional del Consumidor.
- Trejo Delarbre, Raúl. 1991. *Ver, pero también leer*. Mexico City: Instituto Nacional del Consumidor.
- Trejo Delarbre, Raúl. 1992. *La sociedad ausente. Comunicación, democracia y modernidad*. Mexico City: Cal y Arena.
- Trejo Delarbre, Raúl. 1992. *La sociedad ausente. Comunicación, democracia y modernidad*. Mexico City: Cal y Arena.
- Truman, David B. 1951. *The Governmental Process: Political Interest and Public Opinion*. New York: Knopf.
- Tuchman, Gaye. 1978. *Making News*. New York: Free Press.
- U.S. Embassy in México. 1986. "Confidential Letter from the U.S. Embassy in Mexico to the Secretary of State, August 29th 1944" in Confidential U.S. State Department Central Files, *Mexico. Internal Affairs, 1940-1944. Part II: Social, Economic, Industrial, Communications, Transportation and Science*, Frederick, MD, University Publications of America, document file 812.911/8-2944, Reel 64.
- Valenzuela, Nicholas A. 1988. "La invasión electrónica en Estados Unidos", in Raúl Trejo Delarbre (coord.). *Las redes de Televisa*. Mexico City: Claves Latinoamericanas.
- Velázquez Estrada, Rosalía. 1981. "El Estado y la radiodifusión", *Connotaciones*, no.1, Mexico City.
- Wilson, Graham K. 1990. *Interest Groups*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Youm, Kyu Ho and Kyulto Youm. 1986. *Press Law in South Korea*. Iowa: Iowa State University Press.
- Zarur Osorio, Antonio E. 1996. *El Estado y el modelo de televisión adoptado en México, 1950-2000*. Mexico City: Metropolitan Autonomous University.
- Zermeño, Sergio. 1987. "El fin del populismo mexicano", in *Nexos*. Vol.10, no.13, May.

Ziegler, Harmon and G. Wayne Peak. 1972. *Interest Groups in American Society*. 2nd Edition, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Laws and Norms and Regulations relative to the Broadcast Media:

“Acuerdo Presidencial del 27 de junio de 1969 relativo al pago de impuestos sobre concesiones de actividades de interés publico”. *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, June 28th 1969.

“Acuerdo Presidencial por el que se autoriza a la SCT a expedir nuevos títulos de concesión a los actuales concesionarios en materia de radio y televisión, del 27 de junio de 1969”. *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, June 28th 1969.

“Código Federal Electoral”. *Diario Oficial de la Federación*. December 12th 1987.

Comisión de Radiodifusión, *Lineamientos generales aplicables en los noticiarios de radio y televisión respecto de la información y difusión e actividades de campaña de los partidos políticos*. Mexico City: Instituto Federal Electoral, February 1994.

Comisión de Radiodifusión, *Informe global sobre el monitoreo de noticiarios de radio y televisión de los lineamientos sugeridos por la comisión de radiodifusión a la Cámara Nacional de la Industria de Radio y Televisión. Miércoles 22 de junio al martes 16 de agosto de 1994*, Mexico City: Instituto Federal Electoral, September 1994.

Comisión de Radiodifusión, *Informe que presenta la Comisión de Radiodifusión al Consejo General del IFE, en relación con los monitoreos muestrales realizados sobre tiempos de transmisión de las campañas de los partidos políticos en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación*, Mexico City: Comisión de Radiodifusión, Instituto Federal Electoral, March 16th to July 3rd 1997.

Comisión de Radiodifusión, *Monitoreo sobre el tratamiento de la información sobre las campañas políticas en los espacios noticiosos de los medios de comunicación en las entidades federativas de la República Mexicana, January 19th-June 29th 2000*. Mexico City: Comisión de Radiodifusión, Instituto Federal Electoral, CD-Rom.

“Lineamientos generales de apoyo técnico a las estaciones de radio localizadas en la banda de amplitud modulada”. *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, October 2nd 1994.

“Ley de Ingresos de la Federación”. *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, December 29th 1961.

"Ley Federal de Radio y Televisión". *Diario Oficial de la Federación*. January, Tuesday 19th 1960. (LFRT).

"Reglamento a la Ley Federal de Radio y Televisión". *Diario Oficial de la Federación*, April 4th 1973. (RLFRT).

Reporte general sobre el uso de los Tiempos del Estado y de los Tiempos Fiscales en Radio y Televisión durante 1978, Mexico City: Dirección General de Radio, Televisión y Cinematografía, Secretaría de Gobernación, 1979.

Weeklies and Media Reports:

"Advierte Martha Sahagún: Ni impunidad ni libertinaje en los medios". Interview to the Coordinator of Social Communication of the Presidency, in *Proceso*, no.1257, December 3rd 2000.

"Inversión publicitaria en 1995". *El universo de la radio*. Vol.1, n.2, Summer 1995.

"La Radio Mexicana en Cifras". *El universo de la radio*. Vol.1, n.3. Fall 1995.

"Los públicos de la radio". *El universo de la radio*. Vol.2, no.2, Summer 1996.

"Los publicos de la radio". *El universo de la radio*. Vol.3, n.4, Winter-Spring 1997.

"Televisión rural del Estado al servicio de Televisa". *Proceso*, no.141, July 16th 1979.

Adcebra, no.68, October 1997.

Adcebra, no.56, October 1996.

Alberto Aguilar, "Nombres, nombres". *Reforma*, September 10th 1996.

Antena, n.12, July, Mexico City: Camara de la Industria de Radio, 1972.

Antena, n.34, May, Mexico City: Camara de la Industria de Radio y Televisión, 1974.

Antena, n.38, September, Mexico City: Camara de la Industria de Radio y Televisión 1974.

Antena, n.52, November-December, Mexico City: Camara de la Industria de Radio y Televisión, 1975.

Antena, no.34, May, Mexico City: Camara de la Industria de Radio y Televisión, 1974.

Boletín Radiofonico. No.62, March, Mexico City: CIR, 1965.

Boletín Radiofonico-TV. No. 422, August, Mexico City: CIRT 1995.

Casar, Maria Amparo and Ricardo Raphael De la Madrid. "Las elecciones de 1998: la distribución del poder político en Mexico". *Nexos*. No.247, July 1998.

Estudio de hábitos, sintonía de radio y consumo en el Distrito Federal. Asociación de Radiodifusores del Distrito Federal. Mexico City, May 1985.

Etcétera, November 18th 1993.

Expansión, November 26th 1986.

Informe Anual del Banco de México. 1996. Mexico City: Banco de Mexico.

Mediometro Radio. Ciudad de México, INRA, 1980, 1985 and 1990.

Medios Audio-Visuales. No.118-2. Mexico City: Medios Publicitarios Mexicanos S.A. de C.V., June 1988.

Medios Audio-Visuales. No.141-1. Mexico City: Medios Publicitarios Mexicanos S.A. de C.V., March 1994.

Medios Audio-Visuales. No. 153-1. Mexico City: Medios Publicitarios Mexicanos S.A. de C.V., March 1997.

Medios Audio-Visuales. No. 166-2. Mexico City: Medios Publicitarios Mexicanos S.A. de C.V., June 2000.

Medios Audio-Visuales. No.173-1. Mexico City: Medios Publicitarios Mexicanos S.A. de C.V., March 2002.

Printed Press and Newspaper Interviews and Declarations:

Boltvinik, Julio. "Economía Moral. Fábrica de pobres". *La Jornada*, July 14th 2000.

Declarations of CIRT President, Julio Velarde, in *Excélsior*, October 10th 1987.

Declarations of Televisa's Chairman, Emilio Azcárraga Milmo, in *La Jornada*, January 16th 1988.

Declarations of Under-Secretary of *Gobernacion*, Fernando Pérez Correa, in *La Jornada* in February 26th 1988.

El Día, November 4th 1971.

El Financiero, April 22nd 1993.

El Financiero, April 5th 1997.

El Financiero, January 12th 1994.

El Financiero, March 31st 1998.

El Financiero, November 24th 1997.

El Financiero, November 15th 1996.

- El Financiero*, October 12th 1996.
El Financiero, October 15th 1996.
El Financiero, October 16th 1996
El Nacional, July 15th 1976.
El Nacional, May 20th 1996.
El Universal, April 17th 1998.
El Universal, April 27th 1997.
El Universal, June 22nd 1996.
El Universal, November 4th 1999.
Excelsior, August 12th 1998.
Excelsior, January 30th 1972.
Excelsior, November 15th 1971.
Interview of Daniel Moreno to Zabludowsky in "Enfoque", *Reforma*. November 16th 1997.
La Cronica de hoy, August 12th 1998.
La Jornada in February 18th 1988.
La Jornada on August 21st 1994.
La Jornada, April 10th 1992.
La Jornada, April 11th 1998.
La Jornada, August 13th 1994.
La Jornada, August 19th 1994.
La Jornada, August 23rd 1994.
La Jornada, February 19th 1999.
La Jornada, February 24th 1997.
La Jornada, February 2nd 1999.
La Jornada, January 22th, 2000.
La Jornada, January 9th 1998
La Jornada, July 18th 1996.
La Jornada, July 7th 1997.
La Jornada, June 10th 1986.
La Jornada, June 4th 1998.
La Jornada, June 8th 1996

La Jornada, June 8th 1997.

La Jornada, June 9th 1998.

La Jornada, May 22 2000.

La Jornada, May 22nd 1997.

La Jornada, May 23rd 1988.

La Jornada, November 3rd 1999.

La Jornada, October 30th 1996.

La Jornada, September 9th 1999.

Mejía Barquera, Fernando. "Disputa por la TV restringida via satellite". *El Nacional*, November 13th 1995.

Mejía Barquera, Fernando. *La Crónica de Hoy*, August 25th 1997.

Proceso, no.1081, July 20th 1997.

Proceso, no. 323, May 17th 1982.

Proceso, no.515, September 1986.

Reforma, August 16th 1996.

Reforma, August 17th 1998.

Reforma, July 26th 1997.

Reforma, July 27th 1996.

Reforma, July 31st 1998.

Reforma, March 20th 1998.

Reforma, March 21st 1996.

Reforma, March 21st 1998.

Reforma, March 21st 1998.

Reforma, March 6th 2000.

Reforma, May 15th 1995.

Reforma, May 22nd 1997.

Reforma, November 2nd 1995.

Reforma, November 4th 1996

Reforma, October 15th 1996

Reforma, October 1st 1996.

Reforma, October 9th 1996.

Reforma, September 2nd 1999.

Sánchez Ruiz, Enrique. "Fin del antiguo régimen televisivo". *Reforma*, January 18th 1998.

The Miami Herald, November 9th 1997.

The Miami Herald, November 9th 1997.

UnomásUno, October 14th 1981.

Interviewed officials and executives:

Moreno López, Margarita. Deputy-Director of Radio Broadcasting at the Dirección Ejecutiva de Prerrogativas y Partidos Políticos of the IFE. August 2000.

José Carreño Carlón, Co-founder of the newspaper *La Jornada* and actual Director of the Communications Department at the Universidad Iberoamericana. July 2000.

Raúl Trejo Delarbre, Professor of the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of UNAM and Director of the monthly opinion magazine *Etcétera*. August 2000.

Guillermo Salas Vargas, Corporate Vice-President of the Radio Network *Grupo Radio Mil*. August 2000.

Roberto Ordorica, former General Manager of the newsbroadcast *Monitor*, of the newsbroadcast *La Ciudad* and owner of the radio local station "La 'I' de Ixtapan" in the State of Mexico. February 2001.

Top-Executive of *Monitor*. December 1999.

Top-Executive of *Grupo Radio Centro*. July 2000.

Share-holder of *MVS TV*. December 1999.

Top-Executive of *Televisa*. July 2000.



